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OOD SHIP
orman Springer

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# Everybody's

NUMBER FIVE MAY, 1922 VOLUME XLVI

*If It's in Everybody's It's a Good Story*

## CONTENTS

**The Blood-Ship** *A Serial* NORMAN SPRINGER 4
First instalment of an old-time sea tale full of romance and adventure
*Illustrations by* HENRY PITZ

**The Looking-Glass** J. D. BERESFORD 25
The love-story of a woman who dreaded the idea of growing old
*Illustration by* DOUGLAS DUER

**Everything Save Honor** *A Novelette* WALTER DE LEON 36
A combination business trip and honeymoon that was a whirlwind of fun and excitement
*Illustrations by* E. HOPPER

**Trapped** HARRY ESTY DOUNCE 58
A love-story that is a joyful reminder of O. Henry

**Black Mountain** MARY BRECHT PULVER 67
A tale of a grim obsession and how it was overcome
*Illustrations by* HARVEY EMRICH

**Swallowed Up** *A Serial* MRS. WILSON WOODROW 81
Hope Ranger finds a perilous way out
*Illustrations by* R. K. RYLAND

**The Spirit of the Beast** ALAN SULLIVAN 106
Something absolutely new in jungle stories
*Illustration by* ERNEST FUHR

**The Bad News** BASIL DICKEY 115
A movie idol plays a part in real life that goes beyond anything on the screen

**Godless Valley** *A Serial* HONORÉ WILLSIE 129
The end of a struggle to be decent
*Illustrations by* ERNEST FUHR

**The Dover Road** A. A. MILNE 157
A play that expounds a bachelor's idea for preventing marital disasters
*Illustrated with photographs*

(*Continued on next page*)

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**Happiness** — EVELYN CAMPBELL 164
Why do women of brain and character marry nonentities?

**Difference** *A Poem* — ANNE HERENDEEN 172

**The Anglophile** — GENE MARKEY 173
The disillusioning of a foolish youth

**Everybody's Chimney Corner** 181
Where reader, author and editor get together to talk things over

**Prose and Worse** — GRIDLEY ADAMS 183

**Everybody's Chestnut Tree** 185

**Cover Design** — H. C. MURPHY

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# *In the June Issue*

## Three Serials, A Complete Novel, A Novelette, Five Stories and a Play

### THE COMPLETE NOVEL

The Locked Room — By Stoddard Goodhue
The solving of a murder mystery as baffling as the Elwell case

### THE NOVELETTE

The Game of Poverty — By Philip Gibbs
Some people will think, no matter how securely you shackle their minds

### THE SHORT STORIES

Sweet and Sour — By Walter De Leon
In which you'll learn some new things about your furnace

Soup and Fish — By George F. Worts
If you want adventure, go to New York

The Spirit of the Man — By Alan Sullivan
What do animals think of us?

The Missing Plans — By Hugh S. Martin
Our secret service in Russia

The Snake-charmer of Kairwan — By Charles Divine
A fascinating story with an Oriental setting

Two of the serials are "Swallowed Up" and "The Blood-Ship," and there will be a new one. *See page 114*

**June *EVERYBODY'S*—out May 15th**

Everybody's

NUMBER FIVE MAY, 1922 VOLUME XLVI

# Hitting Upon All Six

SOME *people continue to ask why* Everybody's *changed its size and became an all-fiction magazine. Here is the answer:*

*The half-and-half monthly magazines—half article, half fiction—were on the wane. The newspapers and the weeklies had preempted half their motive power—articles. They were creeping along with half their cylinders missing. The other half—fiction—was carrying them. It was a hard pull.*

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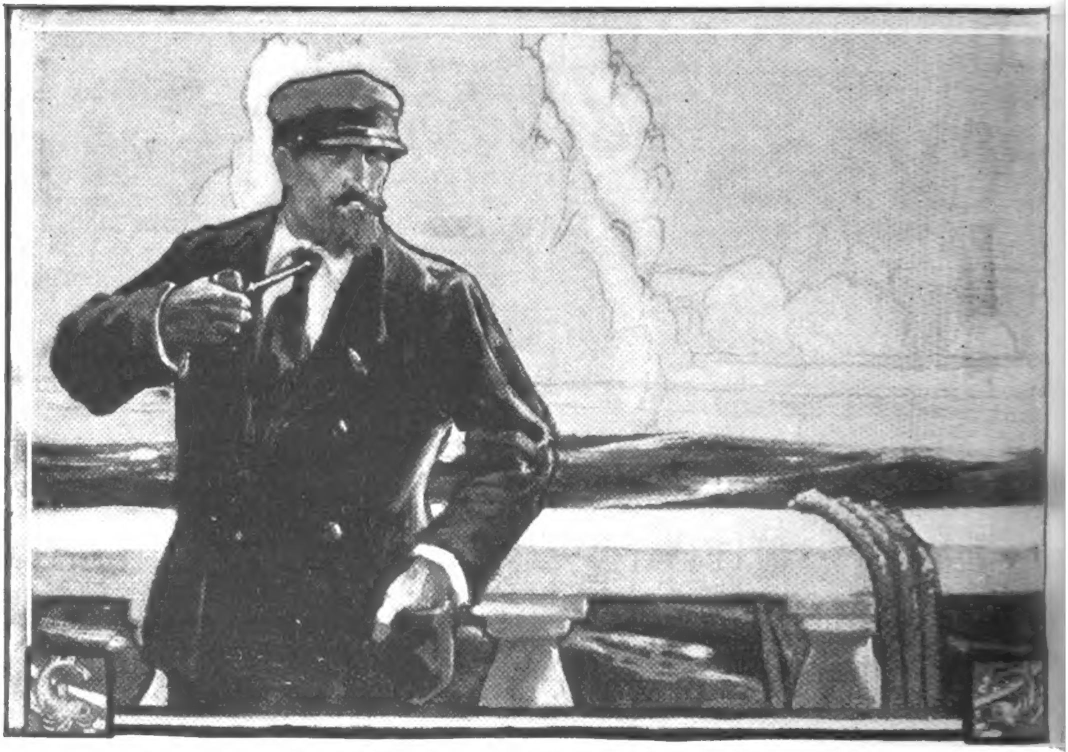
*If You Like Jack London, If You Like*



A black-bearded man who had been lounging on the deck, watching us now.

# *The* Blood-Ship

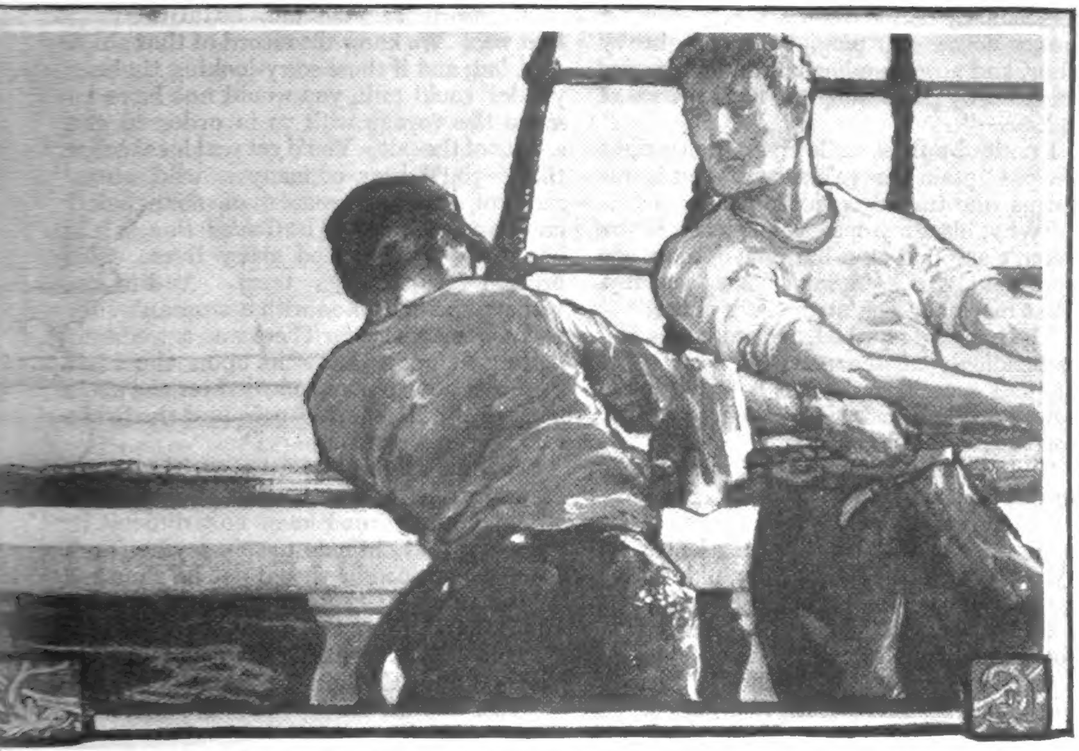
*It's an Old-Time Sea Tale with a Villain. It's Romance and Adven-*

Illustrations

IT WAS the writing guy who drew this story out of Captain Shreve. He had come on board early that morning with a letter from the owner's agent, and announced that he intended making the voyage with us. He had weak lungs, he said, and was in search of mild, tropical breezes. Also, he was seeking local color and information. He had heard of the death of "King" Waldon, down in Samoa—Waldon, the trader, the greatest of the vanishing race of Island adventurers—and he intended to travel about the South Seas investigating his past, so he could write a book about that wonderful old viking. He had heard that Captain Shreve had known the "king;" so he was honoring a common cargo-carrier with his presence, instead of taking his ease upon a mail-boat.

We lay in the stream, with a half-dozen hours to pass ere we proceeded to sea. It was Sunday, so we were idle, the four of us lounging on the lower bridge-deck—the captain, Briggs, myself, and this writer chap. It was pleasant there in the warm afternoon sunshine, and I was thinking how interesting a place is San Francisco Bay when I saw Captain Shreve suddenly sit up straight in his chair and stare over the starboard rail with an expression of lively interest. I followed his gaze, but saw only a ferry-boat in the distance, and, close by,

## ‘The Sea-Wolf,” You Will Like This Story



wung about and damned the helmsman's eye with soft-voiced, deadly words.

### *A Serial in Four Parts*

## By Norman Springer

*Marvelous Hero and a Devilish*
*ure Well Done, Artistically Done*

y Henry Pitz

a big red-funneled tug towing a dilapidated old coal-hulk. The captain's eyes were upon this tow.

"Well, by George!" he exclaimed. "By George—it is!" He turned to the mate, his bright eyes snapping. "Look, Briggs; do you recognize her?"

The tow was passing abreast, but a couple of hundred yards distant. The tug was shortening the line, and on the hulk's forecastle head a couple of hands were busy at a cat-head, obviously preparing to let go anchor. She was ill-favored enough to look at, that hulk—weather-beaten, begrimed, stripped clean of all that makes a ship sightly. Nothing but the worn-out old hull was left. An eyesore, truly. Yet any seaman could see with half an eye she had once been a fine ship. The clipper lines were there.

Briggs inspected the passing hulk with extreme deliberation. Then he uttered his favorite expletive.

"Well, blast my eyes, so it is!" He nodded to the captain. "So it is! So it is! Well, blast my——"

Just then the writing guy glanced patronizingly at the hulk, wrinkled his nose in disapprobation of her appearance, and delivered himself in an oracular voice.

"What a horrible-looking old tub! Not a difficult task to invest her with her true personality. An old work-horse—eh? A broken-down old plug, built for heavy labor, and now rounding out an uninspiring existence by performing the most menial of tasks——"

I noticed a faint smile crack the straight line of Captain Shreve's mouth. But it was Briggs who turned upon the poor scribe.

"Why, blast my eyes, young feller, if you weren't as blind as a bat, you'd know you were talking rot! 'A work-horse,' you say. Blast me, man, look at the lines of her!"

The passenger flushed, and stared uncomprehendingly at the poor old hulk. The tug had gone, and she was lying anchored now, a few hundred yards off our starboard bow—a sorry sight.

"Why, she is just a dirty old scow—" the author began.

"Blast me, can't you even guess what she once was?" went on Briggs relentlessly. "Well, young feller, that dirty old scow—as you call her—is the *Golden Bough!*"

The passenger blinked. The name meant nothing to him. But it did to me.

"The *Golden Bough!*" I echoed. "Surely you don't mean *the Golden Bough?*"

"But I do!" said Briggs. He waved his hand. "There she is—the *Golden Bough*—all that is left of the dashed finest ship that ever smashed a record with the American flag at her gaff. She's a coal-hulk now, but once she was the finest vessel afloat. Eh, captain?"

CAPTAIN SHREVE nodded affirmation. Then he turned to the writing guy, and courteously salved the chap's self-esteem.

"Small wonder you overlooked her build; it takes a sailor's eye for such things. And, really, your description strikes home to me. We are all work-horses, are we not, we of the sea? And time breaks down us all, man and ship." The old man was staring at the hulk, and his voice was sorrowful. "Aye; but time has used her cruelly! What a pity—she was so bonny!"

The writing guy perked up at this.

"Well, you know, I see her through a layman's eyes," he explained. "And she does look so old—and commonplace——"

"Aye; she looks commonplace enough," interrupted Captain Shreve, "providing you know nothing of her history. But she does not look commonplace to Briggs or me. I suppose we regard her through the mist of memory—we see the tall, beautiful ship that was. We know the record of that ship. Aye, lad; and if those sorry-looking timbers yonder could talk, you would not have to make the voyage with us in order to get a taste of the salt. You'd get real local color there—you'd hear of many a wild ocean race, of smashed records, of shanghaied crews and mutinies. The *Golden Bough* left her mark upon a good many lives. She broke men and made them. And once, I know, she had to do with a woman's life, and a woman's love. There was a wedding performed upon that ship upon the high seas, and a dead man sprawled on the deck at the feet of the nuptial pair, and the bride was the dead man's widow!"

"Oh, come now!" said the writing guy. It was plain he thought the skipper was stringing him. But I knew how difficult it was to get our old man to spin a yarn, and I was determined he should not be shunted off on a new tack. I interrupted the author hurriedly.

"Did you ever make a voyage in the *Golden Bough*, Captain?" I asked.

"Yes," replied the captain. "I was a witness to that wedding, and I played my small part in bringing it about. Yes; that old wreck yonder has had a good deal to do with my own life. I received my first boost upward in the *Golden Bough*. Shipped in the fo'c's'le, and ended the voyage in the cabin. Stepped into dead man's shoes. And more important than that—I won my manhood on those old decks."

"Ah—performed some valorous deed?" purred the writing guy.

"No; I abstained from performing an infamous deed," said Captain Shreve. "I think that is the way most men win to manhood."

"Oh!" said the writing guy.

"Let us have the yarn, Captain," I begged.

Captain Shreve squinted at the sun.

"Why, yes," he said. "We have an idle afternoon ahead of us, and I'll gladly spin the yarn. You say, sir, you are interested in ships and sailors, and, particularly, in "King" Waldon's history. Well, perhaps you may find some material of use in this tale of mine.

"Yet it is simply life and living—this yarn. Human beings set down upon those decks to work out their separate destinies as Fate and character directed. Aye; and their characters and the motives that inspired their acts were diverse enough, heaven knows!

"There was Swope, 'Black Yankee' Swope, who captained that hell-ship, a man with a twisted heart, a man who delighted in evil and worked it for its own sake. There was 'Holy Joe,' the shanghaied parson, whose weak flesh scorned the torture because of the strong, pure faith in the man's soul. There were Blackie and Boston, their rat-hearts steeled to courage by lust of gold, their rascally, seductive tongues welding into a dangerous unit the mob of desperate, broken stiffs who inhabited the fo'c's'le. There were Lynch and Fitzgibbon, the buckos, living up to their grim code, and the Knitting Swede, that prince of crimps, who put most of us into the ship. There was myself, with my childish vanity and petty ambitions. There was the lady, the beautiful, despairing lady aft, wife, yet not wife, of the infamous brute who ruled us. And last, and chiefly, there was the man with the scar, he who called himself "Newman," man of mystery, who came like the fabled knight, killed the beast who held the princess captive and led her out of bondage. And I helped him— and saw the shanghaied parson marry them, there on the bloody deck. Stuff for a yarn—eh? But just life, and living."

BUT I must have a beginning for the yarn (said Captain Shreve), so I'll begin with that morning, in this very port of San Francisco, when I walked out of the shipping commissioner's office with my first A. B.'s discharge in my hand and a twelvemonth's pay-day jingling in my pocket. For I must explain something of my state of mind on that morning, so you will understand how I got into Yankee Swope's blood-ship.

It was the heyday of the crimps, and I walked through the very heart of crimpdom, along the old East Street. It is not a very prepossessing thoroughfare even to-day, when it masquerades as the Embarcadero, a sinner reformed. In those days, when it was just East Street, it consisted of solid blocks of ramshackle frame buildings that housed all the varieties of sharks and harpies who live off Jack ashore. But on this morning it seemed the most wonderful avenue in the world to me. I saw East Street through the colorful eyes of youth—the eyes of Romance.

I stepped on my way with my chest out and my chin uptilted. A few paces behind me a beach-comber wabbled along with my sea-bag on his shoulder—for what A. B. would demean himself with such labor on pay day, when moochers abounded at his heel? I was looking for a boarding-house.

But it was not the Sailors' Home. That respectable institution might do very well for boys and callow ordinary seamen, but it certainly would not do for a newly made A. B. Nor was I looking for Mother Harrison's place, as I told Mother's runner, who stuck at my elbow for a time. Mother Harrison's was known as the quietest, most orderly house on the street; it might do for those quiet and orderly old shellbacks whose blood had been chilled by age, but it would never do for a young A. B., a real man, who was wishful for all the mad living the beach afforded. No; I was looking for the Knitting Swede's.

"Knitting Swede" Olson! A fine hole for a young fool to seek! But I was a man, remember—a man—and that precious discharge proved it. I was nineteen years old, and manhood bears a very serious aspect at nineteen. I was A. B. at last—a full-fledged man! Of course, I must straightway prove my manhood; so I was bound for the Knitting Swede's.

Everybody knew the Knitting Swede in those days—every man Jack who ever joined a ship. They told of him in New York, and London, and Callao, and Singapore, and in every fo'c's'le afloat. The king of crimps! He sat in his barroom in East Street, placidly knitting socks with four steel needles, and as placidly ignoring every law of God and man. He ruled the Frisco water-front and made his power felt to the very ends of the seas.

And it was on this very account I was bound for the Swede's house. Very simple and sailorlike, my motive. In my mind's eye I saw a scene which would be enacted on board my next ship. Some fellow would ask me—as some fellow always does, "And what house did you put up in in Frisco, Jack?" And I would take the pipe out of my mouth and answer in a carefully careless voice, "Oh, I stopped with the Swede." And then the whole fo'c's'le would look at me as one man, and there would be respect in their eyes. For only very hard cases ever stopped at the Knitting Swede's.

Well, I found the Swede's place easily enough. I discovered his appearance to be just what the stories described—a tall, great-paunched man, who bulked gigantic as he perched on a high stool at the end of the bar, a half-knitted gray sock in his hands, and an air about him of cowlike contentment. He possessed a mop of straw-colored hair and a pair of little, mild blue eyes that regarded one with all the innocence of a babe's stare.

He suspended his knitting for a moment, gave me a fat, flabby hand, and a grin which disclosed a mouthful of yellow teeth.

"*Ja;* you koom for a good time, and, by and by, a good ship," says he. "Yoost trust the Swede—he treat you right."

So he sent my bag up-stairs to a room, accepted my money for safe-keeping, and I set up the drinks for the house.

What? Give him my money for safe-keeping? Of course. There was a code of honor even in crimpdom, you know. I came to the Swede's house of my own choosing; no runner of his snared me out of a ship. Therefore I would be permitted to spend the last dollar of my pay-day, chiefly over his bar, of course, and when the money was gone, he would ship me in a ship of my own choosing. Unless, of course, men were exceptionally scarce and blood-money exceptionally high.

So, at the Knitting Swede's I was lodged. I spent most of my first day there in examining and getting acquainted with my fellow lodgers. Aye; they were a crowd quite in keeping with the repute of the house—hard-living, hard-swearing, hard-fighting A. B.'s, for the most part, the unruly toughs of the five oceans. I swaggered among them and thought myself a very devil of a fellow. I bought them drinks at the Swede's bar and listened with immense satisfaction to their loud comments on my generosity.

There was one chap in the house who really attracted me. I should have liked to have chummed with him, and I went out of my way to be friendly. He was a giant of a man, with yellow hair and a frosty eye and a very white face. In fact, he looked as though he might have recently been sick—though his huge, muscular frame showed no effects of an illness. He had a jagged, bluish scar over one eye, which traveled up his forehead and disappeared beneath his hair—plainly the memento of some terrible clout. But it was not his face or size which drew me to him; it was his bearing.

You sensed immediately you looked at him, that he possessed a steely armor of indifference that penetrated to his very heart. He was a real hard case, a proper nut, a fellow who simply did not care what happened. It was amusing to observe how circumspectly the bullies of the house walked while in his neighborhood.

But I found him to be a man of silent and lonesome habit, and temperate. He discouraged my friendly advance with a cold indifference, and my idea of chumming with him during my pay-day "bust" soon went glimmering.

THE talk in the Swede's house was all of drink and women and ships. I was too young and clean to find much enjoyment in the first two—much liquor made me sick, and I did not find the painted Jezebels of sailor-town attractive. But ships were my life, and I lent a ready ear to the gossip about them. To tell the truth, I didn't enjoy the Knitting Swede's place very much. I did so want to be a hard case, and I guess I was a pretty hard case, but I didn't like the other hard cases. Youth likes companionship, but I didn't want to chum with that gang. I hadn't been ashore twenty-four hours before I found myself wishing for a clean breeze and blue water.

Shipping was brisk in the port, and I discovered that first day I should have no trouble in picking my ship when my money was gone. So I spent it as violently as possible.

On the third evening of my "bust," my mettle was tested. There was a woman in the Swede's house, a slim wisp of a Jewess, with the sweet face of a Madonna and the eyes of a wanton. Well—she smiled on me. She had good reason to; was I not making my gold pieces dance a merry tune?

But she belonged to the Swede's chief runner, his number-one bouncer, as ugly a brute as ever thumped a drunken sailor. The bully objected, with a deal of obscene threatening, to my fancied raiding of his property. We had it out with bare knuckles in the Swede's big back room, with all the little tables pushed against the wall to make fighting-space, and the toughest crowd in San Francisco standing by to see fair play. I was the younger, and as hard as nails. He was soft and rotten with evil living; so I thrashed him soundly enough in five rounds.

After he had taken the count, I turned away and began to pull my shirt on over my head. I heard a sharp curse, a yell of pain, and the clatter of steel upon the floor. When my head emerged, I beheld my late antagonist slinking away before the threatening figure of the man with the scar. The bully's right arm dangled by his side, limp and broken, and a sheath-knife was lying on the floor at the big man's feet. The sight gave me a rather sick feeling at the pit of the stomach, for I realized I had narrowly escaped being knifed.

The scar-faced man would not listen to my thanks. He bestowed upon me a cool, bracing glance, and remarked, "You must never take your eyes off one of that breed!" Then he resumed his seat at a table in the far corner of the room, and quite plainly dismissed the incident from his mind.

Indeed, the house as speedily dismissed the incident from its collective mind. A fist-fight or a knifing was but a momentary diversion in the Swede's place. Five minutes after he left the room, the whipped bully left the establishment, his one good hand carrying his duffel. The Knitting Swede would have no whipped bouncer in his employ.

That was a purple night for me. I was the victor, and the fruits of the victory were very sweet. The Jewess murmured adoring flatteries in my ear. The others—that crowd of rough, tough men—clapped me respectfully upon the back, felt gingerly of my biceps, and swore loudly and luridly I was the best man in the port. I agreed with them—and set up the drinks again and again. Oh, I was a great man that night!

Only my silent friend in the corner declined to take part in the merrymaking. The man with the scar sat alone, regarding with cool and visible contempt the dizzy gyrations of the roughs who were swilling away the money I had worked for. But his open contempt was not resented. The room gave him plenty of leeway. He was so plainly a desperate man.

"A bad one—he!" whispered the Jewess, lifting an eye toward the lonely table. "He has the house bluffed. Bet you the Swede doesn't try any tricks with him. He's a bad one. Wonder who he is?"

"I know he's a sailorman by the cut of his jib," I replied. "Just out of a hospital, I guess. That scar—and he is so pale."

The woman looked pityingly at me.

"Just out of a hospital!" she mocked. "You certainly haven't been around places like this for very long. Hospital nothing—he's just out of some 'big house.'"

"Some what?" I asked, wonderingly.

"The 'big house'—some state prison," she replied. "Just released—or, maybe, made his getaway."

I stared at the lonely figure and shook my head. He didn't look like a felon.

"He's a sailorman, anyway," I asserted. And in my eyes that covered a multitude of sins.

THE next morning, the Swede interrupted his knitting long enough to toss my last ten dollars across the bar.

"Ay tank you ship now," says he.

"Yes; I am ready to ship," I told him. "But—remember, Swede, in a ship of my own choosing."

He grinned widely, and showed his whole mouthful of yellow teeth.

"Oh, *ja;* you bane pick him yourself. Mineself bane get you good ship, easy ship. Ha, ha!"

Then his mirthful humor ceased abruptly. He leaned toward me, and the lids of his little round eyes slowly lifted. It was like lifting a curtain. For a moment I looked into the unplumbed abyss of the man's soul and felt the full impact of his evil, powerful mind. It was an astonishing revelation of character, that glance. I think the Swede designed it so, for he was about to make me a momentous offer.

"Ay ship you in easy ship, shore-going ship. No watch, no heavy veather, good times—*ja.* You bane thump mine roonar; you bane take his voomans, so—you bane take his yob. You ship by the Knitting Swede—*ja?*"

I'll admit I was completely bowled over for a moment. A hush had fallen upon the room. I heard a voice behind me exclaim softly and bitterly, "Gaw blimme; 'e's got it!" I knew the voice belonged to a big cockney who was himself an avowed candidate for the runner's job. My mind was filled with confused, tingling thoughts. Oh, I was a man, right enough—to be singled out by the Knitting Swede for his chief lieutenancy. I was a hard case, a proper nut, to have that honor offered me. For it was an honor in sailordom. I thought of the fo'c's'les to come, and my shipmates pointing me out most respectfully as the fighting bloke who had been offered a chief runner's berth by the Knitting Swede.

For I did not doubt there would be other fo'c's'les, and soon. Life ashore at the Knitting Swede's was not for me. I was of the sea, and for the sea.

"I'll only ship in a proper ship, Swede," I said decisively. "A clean breeze and blue water for me."

The Swede nodded. My refusal did not disconcert him; I think his insight had prepared him for it. But the tension in the room was released with a loud gasp of astonishment. It was unbelievable to those bullies that such an offer could be turned down. A sailorman refusing unlimited opportunities for getting drunk!

"Gaw' strike me blind; 'e arn't got the guts for hit!" a voice cried at my elbow, and I found the cockney openly sneering into my face.

I saw through his game immediately. Cockney wanted the job, and he wasn't going to allow the Swede to overlook his peculiar qualifications a second time. Therefore he would risk battle with me.

I was nothing loath. I might turn down the job, but I would not turn down a challenge. I stepped back, and my coat was already on the floor by the time the Swede had a chance to form his words. And his words showed him also cognizant of the cockney's ruse.

" 'Vast there, Cocky! Ay bane give you the yob. No need to fight, and get smashed sick. To-night I got vork—to put the crew by the *Golden Bough*."

The cockney's hostility melted into a satisfied smirk. He called upon his Maker with many blasphemies while he assured the Swede he was the very proper bloody bloke for the berth. The crowd straightway lost all interest in the runnership; they had another sensation to occupy them. At the Swede's words, a low growl ran about the room, a growl which swelled into a chorus of imprecations.

The Swede was going to ship the crew for the *Golden Bough* that night! That meant he needed sailors. And every man who was in debt to the Swede or in any way under his thumb—and I suspect every man Jack of them was under his thumb in some fashion or other—quaked in his boots and thought, "Will the Swede choose me?" For they knew ships, those men, and they knew the *Golden Bough*. Some of them had sailed in her.

The Swede grinned jocosely at me.

"How you like to ship by the *Golden Bough?* There bane easy ship, *ja!* Plenty grub, easy vork, good mates——"

"Yah-h-h!" One swelling, jeering shout from the whole room submerged the Swede's joking reference.

"Proper gents, the mates are!" spoke up one of the crowd. "They eats a sailorman every mornin' for breakfast!"

Oh, they knew the *Golden Bough!* Who did not?

"How many, Swede?" called out a man.

"Ay bane ship a crowd of stiffs and some sailormans," stated the Swede.

CURSING broke out afresh. Some of them must go. The bulk of the crew was to be crimped, of course, in the Swede knew what kennels of the town. But a few tried sailormen must go to leaven that sodden, sea-ignorant lump. It was like condemning men to penal servitude. No wonder they swore.

In the midst of their cursing I stood thinking strange thoughts. It is hardly credible, but I was considering if I should tell the Swede I would ship in the *Golden Bough*. And I had heard all about the ship—the most notorious blood-ship afloat, and the queen of all the speedy clippers. I knew of her captain, the black-hearted, silky-voiced "Yankee" Swope, who boasted he never had to pay off a crew; I knew of her two mates, Fitzgibbon and Lynch, who each boasted he could polish off a watch single-handed—and lived up to his boast. I knew of the famous blood-specked passages the ship had made, of the cruel, bruising life the foremast hands led in her. And I stood before the Swede's bar and considered shipping. Oh, Youth! If I shipped, I should be famous the world round as the fellow who feared neither God nor devil nor Yankee Swope and his bucko mates!

So I stood there, half wishful, half afraid, deaf to all save my own swirling thoughts. And there happened that which gave me my decision.

The man with the scar had been lounging against the bar, an uninterested spectator of the bestowal of the runnership. Now my eyes fell upon him, and I saw, to my surprise, that he was shaken out of his careless humor. He was standing tensely on the balls of his feet, and his hands were gripping the bar-rail fiercely. It was apparent some stern emotion wrestled him. There was something indescribably menacing in his attitude.

The crowd was still talking about the *Golden Bough*. They spoke of the ship's mystery, of the captain's lady, sweet angel of mercy in that abode of black cruelty.

"Uncommon queer, I calls it," said one chap, who had sailed in the ship. "They call 'em man an' wife, but she lives to port and he to starboard. Separate cabins, dash me! I had it from the cabin-boy. They even eats separate. He's nasty to her—I've heard the devil snarl at her more than once when I've had a wheel. Blank me, she's a blessed angel. There was I, with a sprained wrist big as my blanked head, an' Lynch a-hazin' me to work—and every mornin' she trips into the fo'c's'le with her bright cheer an' her liniments. A blanked, blessed angel, she is!"

"He beats her," supplemented another man. "I got it from a mate what chummed with the bloke as was on her one voyage. He said as how Swope got drunk and beat her."

The big cockney, who had been visibly possessed by a pompous self-importance since his elevation to the dignity of runner, saw fit to interpose his contrary opinion of the lady of the *Golden Bough*. Because the man was vile, his words were vile.

"Blimme; yer needn't worrit abaht Yankee Swope's lydy, as yer call 'er. She arn't nah bleedin' lydy—she's just a blarsted Judy. Yer got to knock a Judy abaht, arn't yer? Hi 'arve hit straight—'e picked 'er hoff the streets——"

The man with the scar wheeled on his heel reached out and grasped the cockney by his two wrists.

"You vile dog, you lie!" he cried. "Say you lie!"

Cockney was a big man, and husky. He cursed and struggled. But he was a child in the grasp of that white-faced giant towering over him. He squirmed and whimpered—then broke down, and screamed in agony:

"Ow, Gaw' blimme; let hup! Hi never meant northin'! A lie— Ow, yuss—a bloody lie! She's a proper lydy. Hi never 'eard the hother—Gaw' strike me blind!"

The man with the scar cast the fellow contemptuously away—and Cockney lost no time in putting the distance of the room between them. The big man turned on the Swede, and his voice was sharp.

"Swede, does the *Golden Bough* sail tomorrow?"

"*Ja;* with da flood," the Swede replied.

"Then I ship in her," declared the man. "I ship in the *Golden Bough*, Swede."

It was the spark needed to fire my own resolution. What another would do, I would do. I thumped the bar with my fist and sang out valorously,

"I ship in her too, Swede!"

The Swede's needles ceased their flashing in and out of the gray yarn, and he regarded us silently for a moment with his baby stare. Then he leaned back on his stool, and his big belly quivered with his wheezy laughter.

"By yiminy, Ay tank da *Golden Bough* have vun lively voyage!" he exclaimed.

LATE that night the Swede himself put us on board, pulling us in a whitehall from Meigg's Wharf to the anchorage off Alcatraz, where the *Golden Bough* was lying ready for sea. But before that occurred there happened several little incidents that appeared peculiar to my sailor's eye—little incidents connected with our signing on and going aboard that were certainly out of the ordinary.

We signed articles at the Swede's. A little man with a pimply, bulbous nose, who carried in his person the authority of shipping commissioner and in his hand the articles of the *Golden Bough*, appeared in the house; and after the careless fashion of the day we signed on without further ado for a voyage to Hongkong and beyond, sitting at a table in the back room and cementing the contract with a drink around.

There was nothing peculiar about this proceeding, but there was about the manner and actions of my new shipmate. Bulbous Nose made the usual pretense of reading the articles. Then he squinted up at us.

"What's yer John Henrys?" says he.

The man with the scar hesitated a moment, then laughed shortly.

"Oh, let us say 'Newman'," he remarked. "That is as good a name as any."

He seized the pen from the fellow's hand and wrote the name in the proper place upon the articles—"A. Newman."

I wrote my own "John Shreve" below, with an outward flourish, but with a somewhat sinking sensation inwardly.

As soon as the ceremony was completed, Newman got to his feet, gave me a curt nod and went up-stairs to his room. And there he remained until we were ready to leave for the dock. That seemed very peculiar to my sailor's mind. Here we were, shipmates, together committed to a high adventure, yet the man would not tarry by my side long enough to up-end a schooner to a fair passage. I was surprised and resentful. It is hard for a nineteen-year-old man to stand alone, and I felt that Newman, my shipmate, should give me the moral support of his companionship.

So I strutted away the day in lonely glory. Because I had not the courage to violate all the hoary traditions of the fo'c's'le by joining my ship sober, I imbibed as steadily as my youthful stomach permitted. By nightfall I was mellow.

We rode down to the dock in a hack. I was considerably elated when the vehicle drew up before the door—it is not every sailorman who rides down to the dock in a hack, you bet! The Swede was spreading himself to give us a grand send-off—as well he might, for Swope had to pay heavy blood-money for his men.. But I modified my opinion of the Swede's generosity when Newman appeared. My shipmate had his face concealed by a pulled-down hat and turned-up pea-coat collar, and he made a quick dash from the door to the shelter of the carriage. That chap Newman didn't want to be seen abroad in San Francisco's streets—hence the hack.

The ride was made amid a silence that I found was a dismal and complete dampener to my jovial and expansive mood. The Swede slumped in one seat, with our dunnage piled by his side, and grunted unintelligibly at my efforts to make conversation. The man with the scar sat by my side and spoke but once.

"You are sure the lady sails, Swede?" was what he said.

"*Ja;* I have it vrom Swope himself."

Now, of course, I had already reasoned it out that Newman was sailing in the ***Golden Bough*** because of the lady aft, and that he had once owned some other name than "Newman." That was as plain as the nose on my face. I didn't bother my head about it; the chap's reasons were his own, and fo'c's'le custom said that a man should be judged by his acts, not by his past or his motives. But I did bother my head about his question in the hack—or rather about the Swede's manner of replying to it. There was respect in it—as though he were talking to some skipper. It considerably increased the feeling of awe I was beginning to have for my stern shipmate.

I HAD supposed we would join the rest of the crew at the dock and go on board in orthodox fashion—on a tug, with drugged and drunken men lying around, to be met at the rail by the mates and dressed down into the fo'c's'le. Such was the custom of the port. But when we alighted at Meigg's Wharf, not a sailor or runner was in sight. The hack rattled away; the Swede, bidding us gather up our dunnage and follow him, waddled to the wharf-edge and disappeared over the string-piece.

"Why, where is the crew?" I asked of Newman.

"They'll follow later," he replied. "The Swede is going to put us two aboard. He's getting the boat free now."

I stopped stock-still. The Swede was putting us on board! It was most unusual for him to go down to the dock with a couple of men—and now he was going to fasten his lordly hands upon a pair of oars and row us out to our vessel!

"Say, what is the idea?" I demanded.

Newman placed his hand upon my shoulder.

"What say you call it off, lad?" he said. "That hell-ship yonder is no proper berth for you. Take my advice and dodge round the corner with your bag. I can fix it with the Swede all right."

"I shipped in her, and I'll sail in her," I told him shortly. "I can stand as much hell as any man, and I'd join her if I had to swim for it. That flaming packet can't scare me away; I'll take a pay-day from her yet!" Oh, I was bound I'd live up to my reputation as a hard case! I was letting

Newman know I was just as proper a nut as he himself.

The Swede hailed us from the darkness beyond. We reached the wharf-edge and dimly made out the Swede's huge bulk squatting in a boat below. "Yump in!" he bade us. We tossed our bags down, followed ourselves, and a moment later I was bidding farewell to the beach.

The Swede lay back manfully upon the oars, grunting with every stroke. He was expert; he seemed to make nothing of the inrushing tide, and quickly ferried us out into the fairway. Newman and I sat together in the stern-sheets, each wrapped in his mantle of dignified silence.

The Swede lay on his oars when we were a few hundred yards from the ship, allowing us to drift down with the tide. He fumbled about his clothes for a moment, and then produced a bottle.

"Here, yoongstar; you bane take a yolt!" he commanded, passing me the bottle.

I thought he was just bolstering up my courage, and I was grateful. I swallowed a great gulp of the fiery stuff. It was good liquor, and possessed an added flavor I was stranger to. I passed the bottle to Newman. He accepted it, but I noticed he did not drink.

The Swede lifted up his voice and hailed the ship. Immediately the most magnificent foretopsail-yard-ahoy voice I had ever heard bellowed a reply:

"Ahoy, the boat! What d'ye want?"

"That bane Lynch," remarked the Swede to us. He raised his voice in reply:

"Ay bane Swede Olson with two hands for you! Heave over da Yacob's ladder, Mistar Lynch!" Then he lay back on his oars and shot us under the quarter.

A MOMENT later the three of us were standing on the clipper's main-deck, confronting a large man who inspected us with the aid of a lantern. Afterward, I discovered Mr. Second Mate Lynch to be a handsome muscular chap, with not so much of the bucko in his bearing as his reputation led one to expect. But at the moment I was impressed only by his big body and stern face. In truth, even that impression was hazy, for that drink I had taken from the Swede's bottle a moment before seemed to have been potent stuff.

Lynch turned, and his voice rumbled into the lighted cabin alleyway.

"Oh, Fitz, come here! Those two jaspers we heard about have come aboard!"

A moment later a man came from the cabin and stood by Lynch's side. Here was a true bucko—even my addled wits sensed that. A human gorilla with a battered face and brutal, pitiless mouth—the dreaded Fitzgibbon, "chief kicker" of the *Golden Bough*. Mr. Fitz regarded Newman and me with a sneer.

"Huh! Stewed to the gills! What did you dope 'em with, Swede?" he said. Then he added to Lynch: "Good beef, though. They'll pull their weight. Hope there are more like them." He gave his regard to me, looked me up and down slowly, and then turned his eyes on Newman. "Huh! Shipped themselves, did they? Two jumps ahead o' the police, I bet. Lord, what a cargo he's got aboard!"

This last referred to Newman. I was staring at him myself in stupid surprise, his peculiar antics aiding me to retain a slender clutch on my senses.

For Newman was drunk, rip-roaring drunk. Now, mind, he had been cold sober a few moments before when I handed him the Swede's bottle, and I was quite certain he had not touched that bottle to his lips. He came over the rail with the bottle clutched in his hand, and as soon as he touched the deck he was as pickled as any sailor who ever joined a ship. He hung his head and lurched unsteadily from foot to foot, mumbling to himself. Suddenly he brandished the bottle and began to howl, "Blow the Man Down," in a raucous voice.

"Stow that!" commanded Lynch shortly. "You'll wake up the lady."

Newman shut up.

"Vas the lady on board?" asked the Swede respectfully.

"Yes—and if that jasper rouses her, I'll shove a pin down his gullet," answered Lynch. "Here, you two," he commanded us; "gather up your dunnage and get for'ard!"

Newman and I grappled laboriously with our bags. Fitzgibbon spoke to the Swede.

"When does the crew come off?"

"Flood-tide," answered the Swede. "Captain Swope comes with them. And I bane send a port-gang to get you oonder vay."

"Hope there are some more huskies like these two," said Lynch.

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

"*Ja;* day bane all able seamans," declared the Swede.

"You're a filthy liar!" I heard Lynch comment. But further words I lost, for Newman and I went stumbling forward to the fo'c's'le.

We dumped our bags upon the floor, and Newman lighted the lamp. My knees gave way, and I sat down upon the bench that ran round the tiers of empty bunks. Then, when the flickering light revealed my companion's face, I felt another shock of surprise.

For Newman was sober again! As soon as he was out of sight of that party on the after-deck, he dropped his inebriety like a mantle. The face I looked at was alert and hard-set, and the eyes gleamed strangely as though the man were laboring under a strong, repressed excitement. Also, Newman wore an air of triumph, as though he had just accomplished a difficult victory. My tongue had suddenly become very thick, but I managed to mumble a query:

"Say, matey; what's the game?"

He regarded me sharply.

"What's the matter with you, lad?" he exclaimed. He leaned over, pressed up one of my eyelids, and looked into my eye. Then he tilted the bottle he still carried and wetted his lips with the liquor. "That Swede! He drugged this bottle. Bound to get the blood-money for you."

I didn't answer. I couldn't, for while Newman was speaking, a wonderful thing happened. He suddenly dwindled in size until he was no larger than a manikin, going through the motion of drinking from a tiny bottle, while, in contrast, his voice increased so tremendously in volume it broke upon my ears like a surf upon a beach. I couldn't grasp the miracle.

"Well, not enough to hurt—all right to-morrow—" Newman boomed. Then he picked me up in his arms and deposited me in a bunk. He got a blanket out of my bag and spread it over me. I found something very comical about this. One hard case tucking in another hard case, like a mother tucks in her child!

The last thing I saw, or thought I saw, ere oblivion overcrept me, was Newman's figure stretching out in a bunk opposite.

MY HEAD ached, my tongue was thick and wood-tasty, but I woke in full possession of my faculties. Even in the brief instant between the awakening and the eye-opening, I sensed what was about.

The motion told me the ship was under way. The noises that had probably roused me—boomed commands, stormed curses, groans, sounds of blows, stamping of feet—all told me that the mates were turning-to the crew. I sat up and looked around.

It had been dark night, and the fo'c's'le empty, when Newman tucked me in for my drugged siesta. Now it was broad day, and bright sunlight streaming into the dirty hole through the open door showed men's forms sprawled in the bunks about me.

The *Golden Bough* had a topgallant fo'c's'le, the port and starboard sides divided by a partition that reached not quite to the deck above, and which contained a connecting door. Newman and I had stumbled into the port fo'c's'le the previous night, and as I sat up I discovered that the babel of sound came from the starboard side of the partition. I swung up into the bunk above my head, raised my eyes above the partition and looked down.

I saw Lynch, the second mate, standing in the middle of the starboard fo'c's'le's floor. He was turning-to the crew. His method was simple, effective, but rather ungentle. His long arm would dart into a bunk where lay huddled a formless heap of rags. This heap of rags, yanked bodily out of bed, would resolve itself into a limp and drunken man. Then Lynch would commence to eject life into the sodden lump, working scientifically and dispassionately, and bellowing the while ferocious oaths in the victim's ear.

"Out on deck with you, you rat!" he would cry, shaking the limp bundle till teeth rattled. A sharp clout on either jaw would elicit a profane protest from the patient. The toe of his heavy boot, sharply applied where it would do most good, would produce further evidences of life. Then Lynch would take firm grasp of the scruff of the neck and seat of the breeches, and hurl the resurrected one through the door onto the deck and out of range of vision. A waspish voice streaming blistering oaths proved that Fitzgibbon was welcoming each as he emerged into daylight. Another voice, melodiously penetrating the raucous sounds, proved that another man was watching the crew turn to. I recognized this last voice from description—it was the famous, silky, musical voice of Yankee

Swope. "Stir them up, mister! Make them jump! My ship is no hotel!" is what it said.

The second mate boosted the starboard fo'c's'le's last occupant deckward; then he paused a moment for a breathing-spell. Next, his roving eye rested upon my countenance blinking down at him from the top of the wall.

"Oh, ho—so you have come to life, have you, bully?" he addressed me. "The Swede said you would be dead till afternoon."

I leaped down from the upper bunk and stood before him, feeling rather sheepish at having been discovered spying.

"Where is that big jasper who came aboard with you?" he suddenly demanded of me.

"Why—there," I replied promptly, indicating the bunk opposite.

Then I became aware that Newman was not in that bunk—and a rapid survey of the fo'c's'le showed he was not in any bunk. He was gone, though his sea-bag was still lying on the floor. The bunk I thought he was in contained an occupant of very different aspect—a short, spare man, of some thirty years, wearing an old red-flannel shirt. Lynch and I contemplated him in silence for a moment.

He was no beach-comber or sailor—one could tell that at a glance. His skin had no tan upon it, and was white and soft. His white face looked intelligent and forceful, even in unconsciousness.

In some way the man had come by a wicked blow upon the head, the cause, I suspected, of his swoon and stertorous breathing. Dried blood was plastered on the boards about his head, and his thick dark hair was clotted and matted.

Lynch leaned over and opened one of the fellow's loosely clenched hands. It was as white and soft as a lady's hand.

"Huh—this jasper is no bum—or sailor," declared Lynch. "That damned Swede's been up to some o' his tricks." He straightened up and turned on me with another demand for Newman. "Where did you say that big jasper was?"

I shrugged my shoulders helplessly. I could have sworn Newman had turned into that bunk—and I told him so.

"Huh! Didn't have the guts to face the music, I reckon, and cleared out. Well—if he tried to swim for it, I'll bet he's feeding fishes now." His eyes roved around the room. Several of the bunks were occupied by nondescript figures, but Newman's huge bulk did not appear. "Damned seedy bunch," commented Lynch. "Couldn't afford to lose good beef— Hello! Who's this?"

His exclamation was caused by his eyes resting upon the bunk farthest forward. The body of a big man lying therein loomed indistinctly in the dim. Lynch reached the bunk with a bound. I was close behind.

But it was not Newman. It was—the cockney! The very selfsame man to whom the Swede had tendered the runner's job. He lay on his back, snoring loudly. I laughed.

"It's the runner," I said. "The Swede's chief runner. Swede gave him the job yesterday."

"And gave him a swig out of the black bottle last night," commented Lynch. Then he grasped the significance of the Swede's double cross, and his laughter joined mine. "Ho, ho—shanghaied his own runner! Ho, ho!"

Then it evidently struck Lynch that he was conducting himself with unseemly levity in company with a foremast hand. His face became stern, his voice hard.

"Turn to!" he commanded me. "What are you standing about for? Get out on deck before I boot you out!"

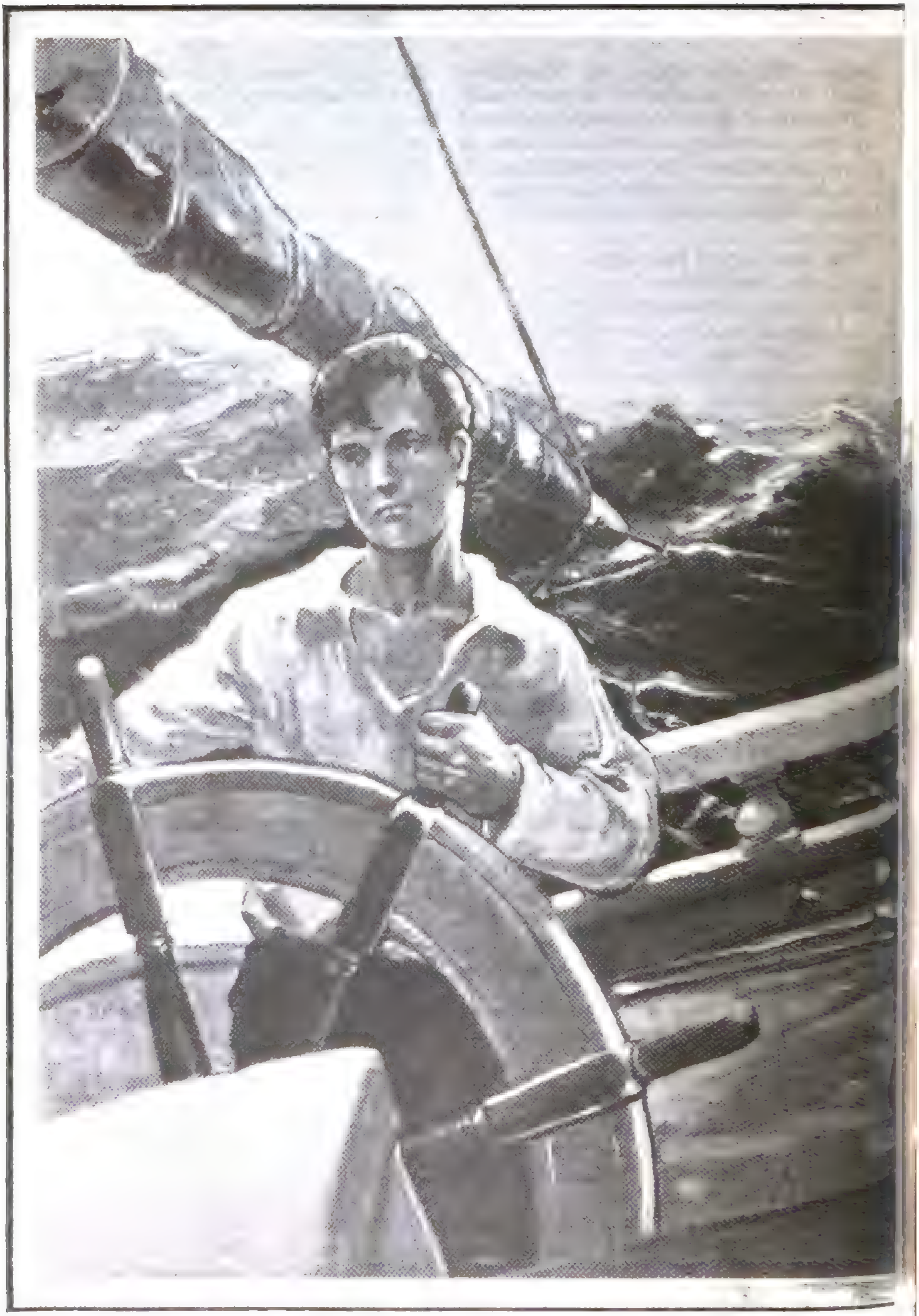
I knew my place, and I obeyed with alacrity. As I reached the door, the second mate's voice held me again for a moment.

"I guess you are a smart lad," says he. "I'll pick you for my watch, if Fitz don't get ahead of me. Got your nerve—shipping in this packet! If you know your work, and fly about it, you'll be all right—otherwise, God help you!"

DURING my brief communion with Lynch in the fo'c's'le, I had, of course, been conscious of ship work proceeding on deck. Now, as I stepped into the bright daylight, I saw just what work was doing.

The vessel was aback, her way lost for the moment. Abeam, a tug was puffing away from us, carrying the port-crew—who had lifted anchor and taken the *Golden Bough* to sea—back to San Francisco. And we were fairly to sea. The voyage had begun.

We got the ship under way, and then



Swope suddenly paused near her. "Ah, madame, commencing your good works so soon?" he remarked
You will have a patient or two

n a soft, sneering voice. "Well, from all signs for'rd, you had better overhaul your medicine-chest.
o sniffle over to-morrow morning."

jumped to other work. Lynch had flung several more sick, frightened wretches out of the fo'c's'le, and now he joined with the mate in forcible encouragement of our efforts. The port gang had hoisted the yards and loosed the sails, but the upper canvas was ill-sheeted, and soon we were pully-hauling for dear life.

There came an ominous flapping of canvas aloft.

"He done gib her too much wheel!" said a big mulatto, who was working shoulder to shoulder with me. "Lawd help him!"

A black-bearded man who had been lounging on the deck, watching us, at whom I had been casting curious and fearful glances as I rushed about beneath his arctic glare, now swung about and damned the helmsman's eye with soft-voiced, deadly words. The mates' voices dropped low, and we listened to Yankee Swope's storm of venomous curses with bated breath.

Those curses of Captain Swope! God keep me from ever hearing their like again. They sounded worse than harsh, or vile—they sounded inhuman! Lynch's oaths spoke of force, and Fitzgibbon's of cruelty, but Yankee Swope's oaths bespoke red torture and all manner of black hellishness. The words came soft and melodious from his lips, but they were forked with poison and viciousness. As we of the fo'c's'le listened to him curse the helmsman, that first morning out, each man felt Fear's icy finger touch the pit of his stomach.

Captain Swope suddenly cut short his blasphemies, and, turning, caught sight of us, men and mates, standing idle by the main fife-rail.

"What's this, misters?" he sang out. "Going asleep on the job? Rush those dogs—rush them! And send a man aft to the wheel—a sailorman! This damned Dutchman doesn't know how to steer!"

Those evenly spoken words roused us to a very frenzy of effort. Fitzgibbon struck out blindly at the man nearest him and began to curse us in a steady stream. Lynch reached out and dragged me away from the line I was heaving on.

"Aft with you!" he ordered me. "Take the wheel—lively, now!"

Lively it was. I ran along the lee deck toward the poop, my belly griped by the knowledge that the black-bearded man was watching my progress. Nineteen-year-old man I might be, able seaman and hard case, but I'll admit I was afraid—afraid of that lethal figure who reigned on the poop, afraid of that soft voice which cursed so horribly.

IT WAS a little squarehead from whom I took the wheel—a young Scandinavian, a mere undersized, scrawny boy. He was pallid, and glazy-eyed with terror, as well he might be after facing the old man's tirade, and when I took the spokes from his nerveless grasp, he had not sufficient wit left to give me the course. Indeed, he had not much chance to speak, for Captain Swope had followed me aft, and as soon as I had the wheel he commenced on the luckless youth.

"So—you didn't watch her, hey? Ah—now I'll show you what happens in my ship when a man goes to sleep at his job," he purred. Purred—aye; that is the word. I could see through his beard the tip of his tongue rimming his lips as he contemplated the frightened boy—much like a cat contemplating a choice morsel about to be devoured; and there was a beam of satisfaction in his eye. Oh, it was very evident that Yankee Swope was about to enjoy himself!

The poor squarehead cowered backward a step from that threatening figure, and Swope stepped forward and drove his clenched fist into the boy's face, smashing him against the cabin skylights. The boy cried out with pain and fear, the blood gushing from his nose, and, placing his hands over his face, he tried to escape by running forward. Swope, the devil, ran beside him, showering blows upon his unprotected head, and as they reached the break of the poop, he knocked the boy down. Then he gave him the boots—he kicked him heavily about the body, while the boy squirmed and pleaded in agonized broken English for mercy. It was a brutal, revolting exhibition. I was an untamed fo'c's'le savage myself, used to cruelty, and regarding it as natural and inevitable, but as I stood there at the wheel and watched Yankee Swope manhandle that boy, I became sick with disgust and rage—aye, and with fear, for what was happening to the squarehead might well happen to me.

The boy ceased to squirm under the impact of the boots, and his pained cries were silenced. Then the captain ceased his kicking, though he did not cease the silky-toned black curses that slid from his lips. He leaned over the bruised, insensible form, grasped the clothes and heaved the boy clear off the poop, much as one might heave aside a sack of rubbish. So the little squarehead vanished from my ken for the time being, and I heard the thud of his body striking the deck below.

Swope stood looking down at his handiwork for a moment; then he swung about and came aft, brushing invisible dirt from his clothes as he walked. When he drew near, I saw his eyes were bright with joyous excitement. Yes—by heaven!—Captain Swope was happy because of the work he had just done; he was a man who found pleasure in inflicting pain upon others. He paused at my side, glanced sharply at me, then aloft at the highest weather-leech, for I was steering full and by. But he found no cause for offense, and after damning my eye to be careful, he turned away and began pacing up and down. I was in a furious rage against the man, but when he looked at me, my knees felt weak and I answered his words respectfully and meekly indeed. God's truth, I was afraid of him!

Oh, it was not his size. Yankee Swope was only of medium build; I was much the better man physically, and could have wiped the deck with him in short order—though, of course, a quick death would have rewarded any such attempt upon the master of the *Golden Bough*. Nor was his face ill to look upon. Indeed, he had a handsome face, though beard and mustache covered half of it. And there was a peculiar and disturbing glitter in his black eyes. Some of my fear was caused, I think, by the sinister softness of his voice. But most of it was caused by the impression the man himself gave—call it personality, if you like. It was much like the impression of utter recklessness that Newman gave; only, in Yankee Swope's case it was not recklessness but utter wickedness.

So I looked after him, and thought, while he paced the poop and I held the wheel, "You're in for it, Shreve! This packet is so hot she sizzles, and this old man is a beast, a monster, and no fatal error! There will be bloody, sudden death before the passage is ended, or I'm a ruddy soldier." Aye; and if I had but known how truly prophetic my thoughts were!

Standing there at the wheel, with one eye upon Captain Swope and the other upon my work, I found I owned a full measure of rueful thoughts. The *Golden Bough* was an eye-opener to me, used though I was to hard ships and hard men. I wished I had not proved myself such a hard case back there in the Swede's. I cursed myself for a vainglorious fool for having put myself in such a hole. The only rift in my cloud of gloom was Lynch; the second mate had seemed favorably disposed toward me, I reflected, and had promised to choose me for his watch. He said I should be safe if I jumped lively to my work; and I promised myself to do that same, for I foresaw a cruel fate for the malingering man aboard that vessel.

FROM Lynch, my thoughts naturally jumped to Newman. What had become of him? Deserted, swam ashore, as Lynch had declared? Developed a craven streak and cleared out? No. My grim, reserved companion of the night before had had some strong, secret purpose in joining the *Golden Bough;* if he had deserted, I knew it was in obedience to that same hidden purpose and not from fear of ship or officers.

It was while I was speculating about Newman's disappearance that Lynch came aft and reported that fact to the old man, in my hearing.

"We have them all hustling except two," he told Swope. "One jasper the Swede dosed with his black bottle, and another one who has been sandbagged. I'll have them on deck by muster. A damned seedy bunch, taken by and large, Captain! We're one hand shy."

"What's that? One hand shy?" exclaimed Swope sharply.

"Yes, sir; cleared out, I expect. Came on board last night. One of the two the Swede told us about, who picked the ship themselves. There's one of them at the wheel. But the other one, the big one, was gone this morning. Best-looking beef of the entire lot, too. Good sailorman, or I'm a farmer—looked like an officer down on his luck."

Swope turned to me.

"Where is the fellow who came on board with you?" he demanded.

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

"I don't know, sir," I replied. "He had disappeared when I woke up this morning."

"Huh! Sounds fishy!" was his response. "Don't lie to me, my lad, or I'll wring your neck for you!"

He stood silent a moment, opening and shutting his fingers, just as though he were turning the matter over in the palms of his hands. Then he cursed.

"You searched about for'ard for him?" he asked Lynch.

"Yes, sir; he isn't on board."

"Then why are you bothering me?" the old man wanted to know. "If the swab is gone, he's gone. Drive the rest of the dogs the harder to make up for his loss."

He resumed his pacing of the poop, while Lynch went forward.

I was well enough pleased by the ending of the incident. For a moment I had feared the captain would blame me for Newman's absence. With the little squarehead's fate fresh in my mind, I had no desire to cross Yankee Swope's temper.

But I could not help thinking about Newman. His going was a mystery, and, moreover, I was sorry to see the last of him. It was not fear that made him clear out—of that I was certain. What then? The lady?

QUITE naturally my thoughts turned to the *Golden Bough's* lady. To think of Newman was to think of her. I was sure she had drawn him on board the ship. Had she, then, sent him packing ashore while I slept? What was he—a discarded lover? Had he shipped so he might worship his beloved from the lowly fo'c's'le? Oh, I read my Southworth and Bulwer in those days, and had some fine ideas regarding the tender passion. I felt sure there was some romantic heart-bond between Newman and the lady.

I wondered if the lady were really so lovely, possessed of such goodness of heart as glowing fo'c's'le report declared. Was she really an incarnate Mercy in this floating hell? Did she really go forward and bind up the men's hurts? Why did she not show herself on deck this fine morning? I wanted to see this angel who was wedded to a devil.

I heard her voice first, ascending through the skylight. It thrilled me. Not the words—she was but giving a direction to the Chinese steward—but the rich, sweet quality of the voice. I, the fo'c's'le Jack, whose ears' portion was harsh, bruising oaths, felt the gentle accents as a healing salve. They stirred forgotten memories; they sent my mind leaping backward over the hard years to my childhood and the sound of my mother's voice. No wonder; I had scarce once heard the mellow sound of a good woman's voice since I ran away to sea five years before.

She ascended from the cabin and stepped out upon deck, and, as if moving as far as possible from the harsh voices forward, came aft and stood near the wheel. And at the first glance, I knew that report of the lady was not overdrawn, that the most glowing descriptions did ill justice to her loveliness.

Her age? Oh, twenty-four, perhaps. Beautiful? Aye; judged by any standard. But it was not her youth or the trimness of her figure or the mere physical beauty of her features that touched the hearts and made reverent the voices of rude sailormen. No; it was something beyond, something greater than the flesh that commanded our homage.

Once since have I seen a face that was like the face of Captain Swope's wife—in a great church in a Latin country. It was a painting of the Madonna, and the master who had painted it had given the Mother's face an expression of brooding tenderness as deep as the sea, an expression of pity and sympathy as wide as the world. You felt, as you looked at the picture, that the artist must have known life, its sufferings and sins.

There was a like expression in the face of the captain's lady. She was no pretty lass whose sweet innocence is merely ignorance. She was a woman who had looked upon life; you felt that she had faced the black evil and hideous cruelty in a man's world, and that she understood and forgave. You felt her soul had passed through a fierce white heat of pain, and emerged burned clean of dross, free of all petty rancor or hatred. It glowed in her face—this wide understanding and sympathy—looked from her eyes and sounded in her voice, and it was this that won the worship of the desperate men and broken derelicts who peopled the *Golden Bough's* fo'c's'le.

Hair? Oh, yes, she had hair—a great mass of it piled on top her head—black hair. Eyes? Her eyes were blue, not the washed-out blue of a morning sky, but the changing, mysterious purple-blue of deep water. She turned those wonderful eyes upon me as I stood there at the wheel, and the red blood flushed my cheeks while the mask of cynical hardness I had striven so hard to cultivate fled from my face. She saw through my pretenses, did the lady; she saw me as I really was—a boy playing desperately at being such a man as my experience had taught me to admire. I was abashed. I was no longer a hard case with those pitying, understanding eyes upon me; I was like a lad detected in a mischief, facing my mother.

She had heard some talk in the cabin, or perhaps she had overheard Lynch's report to the old man, for her words showed she knew me as one of the men who had shipped in the vessel of my own will.

"Why—you are only a boy!" she said in a surprised voice. Then her face seemed to diffuse a sweet sympathy and understanding. I can't explain it—but I knew that the lady knew just why I had shipped. She looked inside me and read my heart—and *understood!* "Oh, boy, why did you do it?" she exclaimed softly. "It is not worth it; why did you come? Listen! Do not give offense; whatever they do, show no resentment. Oh, they are hard—forget your pride and be willing!"

She seemed about to say more, but Captain Swope interrupted. When she appeared on deck he affected not to see her; he had paced past her twice, but not by the quiver of an eyelash had he shown cognizance of her presence. Now he suddenly paused near her. Perhaps his sailor's instinct had been ruffled by the sight of her in conversation with the man at the wheel, or, more likely, his eye had noted the scene occurring forward, and he wished to force it upon her attention, because it would cause her pain.

"Ah, madam, commencing your good works so soon?" he remarked in a soft, sneering voice. "Well, from all signs for'rd, you had better overhaul your medicine-chest. You will have a patient or two to sniffle over to-morrow morning."

The lady shuddered ever so slightly at Swope's words, and her features contracted, as though with pain—just for an instant. Then she was serenity again, and she gazed forward, as Swope bade, and silently watched the mates at their work.

They were manhandling, of course. I might have found humor in the scene had not the lady just stirred the softer chords of my being. Away forward, by the fo'c's'le door, Lynch was engaged in dressing down the cockney. This was not a particularly interesting exhibition, though, for although the cockney showed fight, he was clearly outmatched, and rose from the deck to be knocked down again.

BUT by the main-hatch was a more interesting spectacle. Fitzgibbon was busied with the spare red-shirted man—he of the intelligent face and gashed skull, whom I had found so mysteriously occupying the bunk Newman had gone to bed in, and who, Lynch declared, was neither sailor nor bum. There, on the poop, we could not overhear the small man's words for Fitz's shrill cursing, but he seemed to be expostulating with the mate. And he seemed intent on forcing past the mate and coming aft. He would try to run past the hatch, and Fitzgibbon would punch him and send him reeling backward. Even as we watched, the mate seized him by the collar of his red shirt, slammed him up against the rail, and then, with a belaying-pin, hazed him forward at a run.

I heard the lady sigh. Swope chuckled. Then I noticed she was staring fixedly at the side of the cabin skylights. A few drops of the blood the old man had drawn from the little squarehead were splattered upon the woodwork and the deck. Silently she regarded them, and her slight figure seemed to droop a bit. Then, with a queer little shrug, she squared her shoulders and faced the captain with uptilted chin. Aye; and I sensed the meaning of that little shrug, and the squared shoulders. It meant that she had picked up her cross, and that she would courageously bear it in pain and sorrow through the dark days of the coming voyage. For I truly believe the lady suffered vicariously for every blow that bruised a sailor's flesh on board the *Golden Bough*.

"Yes; I must look to my medicines," she replied to Swope. "I see they will be required." There was no active hate in her voice or in her eyes, but she looked at the man much as one looks at some loathsome yet inevitable object—a snake or a toad. And she turned away without further words and descended to the cabin. Swope watched her departure with a half-smile parting his beard and mustache. And, oh, how I longed to be able to wipe that sneer from his mouth with my clenched fist!

THE cockney relieved me at the wheel at one bell, when the mates turned the crowd to, after a short half-hour for dinner. Oh, what a changed cockney from yestereve! He came slinking meekly along the lee side of the poop. When he took over the wheel he had hardly spirit enough in him to mumble over the course I gave him. His eyes were puffed half closed, and his lips were cut and swollen. Gone was the swanking, swaggering cockney who had paraded before the Swede's bar; instead, there was only this cowed, miserable sailorman taking over the wheel. Oh, that cockney had suffered a cruel double-cross when he drank of the black bottle and was hoisted over the *Golden Bough's* rail! Yesterday he was a great man, the Knitting Swede's chief bully, with the hard sea fare behind him, and with unlimited rum and an easy, if rascally, shore life ahead of him. To-day he was just a shellback outward bound, with a sore head and a bruised body, a fellow sufferer in the fo'c's'le of a dreaded ship, mere dirt beneath the officers' feet. Such a fall! Keenly as I disliked the man yesterday, to-day I was sorry for him. The more sorry because I felt that the jocose Swede had come near having me as the subject of his little joke instead of the cockney.

I scurried forward, intent upon dinner. I drew my whack from the Chinaman in the galley and bolted it down in the empty fo'c's'le. It was a miserable repast—a dish of ill-cooked lobscouse and a pannikin of muddy coffee—and I reflected glumly that I had joined a hungry ship as well as a hot one.

I finished the last of that mysterious stew, and then filled and lighted my pipe. I thought I would be allowed the half-hour dinner-spell the rest of the crowd had enjoyed, and I relaxed and puffed contentedly away, determined to enjoy my respite to the last minute, for the sounds from the deck indicated a lively afternoon for all hands. But something occurred to interrupt my cherished "smoke-o," something that caused me to sit up suddenly and stiffly on the bench, while my pipe fell unheeded from my slackened mouth and an unpleasant prickle ran over my scalp and down my spine.

I have already mentioned that the *Golden Bough* had a topgallant fo'c's'le; that is, the crew's quarters were away forward, in the bows of the ship, beneath the fo'c's'le head. It was a gloomy cavern; the bright day of outdoors was a muddy light within.

Well, in the floor of the port fo'c's'le, wherein I was sitting, was the hatch to the forepeak below. It was this yard-square trap-door which caused my agitation. My glance fell casually upon it, and I saw it *move!* It lifted a hair's breadth, and I heard a slight scraping sound below.

Aye; I was startled. A rat? But I knew that even a ship-rat did not grow large enough to move a trap-door. The ghost of some sailorman, haunting the scene of his earthly misery? Well, I had the superstition of a fo'c's'le Jack, but I knew well enough that a proper ghost would not walk abroad in the noon o' day. I stared, fascinated, at that moving piece of wood. It slowly lifted about an inch, and through the narrow slit I saw an eye regarding me with a fixed glare. I glared back, my amazement struggling with the conviction that was oversweeping me; and then, just as I was about to speak, Lynch's voice came booming into my retreat.

"Hey, you! D'ye reckon to spell-o the whole afternoon? If you've finished your scouse, out on deck with you—and lively about it!"

There was no denying that request, eye or no eye. And at the second mate's first word, the trap-door dropped noiselessly closed. I clattered out of the fo'c's'le and to work; but I was turning that little matter of the forepeak-hatch over in my mind, you bet!

It was near dusk, well on in the first dog-watch, when the mates let up with their driving and herded all hands aft to the main-deck. The forepeak-hatch had rested heavily upon my mind all afternoon, and I was tingling with excitement when I went aft with the rest to face the ceremony which always concludes the first day out—

the choosing and setting of the watches and the calling of the muster-roll.

We were a sorry-looking crowd gathered there on the main-deck before the cabin, a tatterdemalion mob, with bruised bodies and sullen faces, and with hate and fright in our glowering eyes. Those of us who were seamen possessed a bitter knowledge of the cruel months ahead; the rest, the majority, faced a fate all the more dreadful for being dimly perceived, and of which they had received a fierce foretaste that merciless day.

Captain Swope came to the break of the poop, lounged over the rail and looked us over. In his hand he held the ship's articles. He regarded us with a sort of wicked satisfaction, seeming to draw delight from the sight of our huddled, miserable forms. Without saying a word, he gloated over us, over the puffed face of the cockney, over the expression of desperate horror in the face of the red-shirted man, over the abject figure of the little squarehead, who had been going about all afternoon sobbing, with his hand pressed to his side, and whose face was even now twisted with a pain he feared to give voice to. Aye; Swope stared down at us, licking his chops, so to speak, at the sight of our suffering. We glared back at him, hating and afraid.

Then the lady appeared at the poop rail, some paces distant from the old man. Aye; it was heartening to turn one's eyes from the old man's wicked, sneering face to the benign countenance of the lady. There was sorrow in that brooding look she gave us, and pity and understanding. She was used to looking upon the man-made misery of men, you felt, and skilled in softening it. There was a stir in our ranks as we met her gaze; a half-audible murmur ran down the line, and the slackest of us straightened our shoulders a trifle. The old man noticed the sudden cheer among us, and, I think, sensed its cause, for, without glancing at the lady, he drawled an order in a sneering voice to the mate, standing just below him.

"Well, Mr. Fitz, start the ball rolling—your first say."

The mate allowed his fierce pig-eyes to rove over us, and, to my secret delight, he passed me by.

"Where's the nigger?" he said, referring to the mulatto, who was at the wheel. "The wheel? Well, he's my meat."

So the watch-choosing began. Lynch promptly chose me, as he had promised he would, and I stepped over to the starboard deck. Fitzgibbon chose the cockney; Lynch picked a squarehead—so the alternate choosing went, the mates' skilled eyes first selecting all those who showed some evidence of sailorly experience.

"You!" said Fitzgibbon, pointing to the red-shirted man, and motioning him to move over to the port side.

The red-shirted man, instead of obeying the mate, stepped out of line and appealed to the captain.

"Captain, may I speak to you now?" he asked in a shrill, excited voice.

"Eh—what's this?" exclaimed Swope, gazing down at the fellow. He lifted his hand and checked the mate, who was already about to collar his prey. "What do you wish, my man?" his silky voice inquired.

A flood of agitated words poured out of the red-shirted man's mouth.

"Captain—a terrible mistake—foully mistreated—all of these men foully mistreated by your officers—tried to see you and was beaten—" With an effort, he made his speech more coherent. "A terrible mistake, sir. I have been kidnaped on board this vessel! I am not a sailor; I do not know how I came to be here—I have been kidnaped, sir!"

"How terrible!" mocked Swope. "I do not doubt your word at all, my man. Any one can see you are no sailor, but a guttersnipe. And possibly you were—er—'kidnaped,' as you call it, in company with the rest of the wharf-rats behind you."

"But, Captain—good heavens, you do not understand!" cried the man. "I am a clergyman—a minister of the Gospel! I am the Reverend Richard Deaken, of the Bethel Mission in San Francisco!"

THE Reverend Richard Deaken! I saw a light. I had heard of the Reverend Deaken while I was in the Swede's house. The labors of this particular sky-pilot were, it appeared, particularly offensive to crimpdom. He threatened to throw a brickbat of exposure into the camp; he was appealing to the good people of the city to put a stop to the simple and effective methods the boarding-masters used to separate Jack from his money and then barter his carcass to the highest bidder. I had heard the Swede himself say, "Ay bane got him before election." And this is how the reverend gentleman had been "got"—crimped into an outward-bound windjammer, with naught but a ragged red shirt and a pair of dungaree pants to cover his nakedness; and he found, when he made his disclosure of identity, that the high place of authority was occupied by a man who enjoyed and jeered at his evil plight.

For, at the parson's words, the old man threw back his head and laughed loudly.

"Ho, ho, ho! D'ye hear that, misters? The Swede has given us a sky-pilot, a damned Holy Joe! By God, a Holy Joe on the *Golden Bough!* Ho, ho, ho!" Then he addressed the unfortunate parson again. "Ho, ho! So you are a Holy Joe, are you? Huh—you don't look it! You look like an ordinary stiff to me. Let me see—what did you call yourself? Deaken?" He lifted the articles and scanned the names that represented the crew. "Deaken—hey? Well, I see no such name written here." I did not doubt that. Save my name and Newman's, I doubted if any name on the articles could be recognized. "I see one name here, written in just such a flourishing hand as a man of your parts might possess—'Montgomery Mulvaney.' That is undoubtedly you—you are Montgomery Mulvaney!"

"But, Captain—" began the parson desperately.

"Shut up!" snapped Swope. "Now, listen to me, my man; you may be a Holy Joe ashore, or you may not be—that does not concern me. But I find you on board my vessel, signed on my articles as 'Montgomery Mulvaney, A. B.' Yet you tell me yourself you are no sailor. Well, my fancy man, Holy Joe or stiff, you'll be a sailor—or a monkey—before this passage ends, or I'm not Angus Swope. Now then, step over there to port, and join your watch!"

"But, Captain—" began the desperate man again. Then he evidently saw the futility of appealing to that fiend above him. Abruptly he turned and addressed the lady. "Madam—my God, madam, can you not make him understand——"

The lady shook her head, frowned warningly and spoke a soft, quick sentence: "No, no—do not protest; do as they say!"

Well she knew the futility of argument and the danger to him who argued. Indeed, even while she spoke, the mate took the parson by his shirt-collar and jerked him roughly into his place.

The mates renewed their choosing, and in a few more moments we were all gathered into two groups, regarding each other across the empty deck. There were fifteen men in the mate's watch, but, because of Newman's absence, only fourteen had fallen to Lynch.

The old man handed down the articles to Lynch.

"All right, mister; muster them," he said. "And"—addressing us generally—"if you don't recognize your names, answer any way—or we'll baptize you anew."

Lynch held the papers before his face. I thrilled with sudden expectancy. Something startling was going to happen. I felt it in my bones.

"Answer to your names!" boomed his great voice. "A. Newman!"

"Here!" was the loud and instant response.

As one man we swung our heads and looked forward. Sauntering aft, and just passing the main-hatch, was the man with the scar. He came abreast of us, and paused there in the empty center of the deck.

It was the lady, on the poop above, who broke the spell of silence the man's dramatic arrival placed upon all hands.

"Roy—it is Roy—oh, Roy!" she said. And she swayed upon her feet and clutched the rail before her as though to keep from falling. She stared down at Newman as if he were a ghost from the grave.

But it was the manner of Captain Swope which commanded the attention of all hands. He was seeing a ghost, too—an evil ghost. It was like fo'c's'le talk—this man had sold his soul to the devil, and the devil was suddenly come to claim his own. Swope stared down at Newman and clutched the rail for support—while the flesh of his face became a livid hue and his expression one of incredulous horror.

"You! You! Where have you come from?" he stuttered in a shrill, strained voice.

**The result of Newman's sudden appearance and many other startling events of the *Golden Bough's* voyage are related in the next instalment. See June EVERYBODY'S—out May 15th.**

# The Looking-Glass

*Is It Wise to Banish the Idea of Growing Old? Isn't It Better to Look Truth in the Face? These Are the Questions Raised in this Excellent Study*

## By J. D. Beresford

Illustration by Douglas Duer

THIS was the first communication that had come from her aunt in Rachel's lifetime.

"I think your aunt has forgiven me at last," her father said, as he passed the letter across the table.

Rachel looked first at the signature. It seemed strange to her to see her own name there. It was as if her individuality, her very identity, was impugned by the fact that there should be two Rachel Deanes. Moreover, there was a likeness between her aunt's autograph and her own, a characteristic turn in the looping of the letters, a hint of the same decisiveness and precision.

"You're very like her in some ways," her father said, as she still stared at the signature.

Rachel's eyelids dropped, and her expression indicated a faint, suppressed intolerance of her father's remark. He said the same things so often and in so precisely the same tone that she had formed a habit of automatically rejecting the truth of certain of his statements. He had always appeared to her as senile. He had been over fifty when she was born, and ever since she could remember she had doubted the correctness of his information. She was, she had often told herself, "a born skeptic, an ultra-modern." She had a certain veneration for the more distant past, but none for her father's period. "Victorianism" was to her a term of abuse. She had long since condemned alike the ethic and the esthetic of the nineteenth century as represented by her father's opinions; so that, even now, when his familiar comment coincided so queerly with her own thought, she instinctively disbelieved him. Yet, as always, she was gentle in her answer.

"I should think you must almost have forgotten what Aunt Rachel was like, dear," she said. "How many years is it since you've seen her?"

"More than forty—more than forty," her father said, ruminating profoundly. "We disagreed; we invariably disagreed. Rachel always prided herself on being so modern. She read Huxley and Darwin and things like that. Altogether beyond me, I admit. Still, it seems to me that the old truths have endured, and will, in spite of all—in spite of all."

Rachel straightened her shoulders and lifted her head; there was disdain in her face, but none in her voice as she replied, "And so it seems that she wants to see me."

She was excited at the thought of meeting this traditional, this almost mythical aunt about whom she had so often heard. Sometimes she had wondered if the personality of this remarkable relative had not been a figment of her father's imagination, long pondered and reconstructed out of half-forgotten material. But this letter of hers that now lay on the breakfast-table was admirably in character. She had written a kindly letter, but the kindliness had an air of pity. It was all consistent enough with what her father had told her.

"Yes, yes; she wants to see you, my dear," her father said. "I think you had better accept this invitation to stay with her. She—she is rich, almost wealthy; and I, as you know, have practically nothing to leave you—practically nothing. If she took a fancy to you——"

He sighed again, and Rachel knew that for the hundredth time he was regretting his own past weakness. He had been so foolish in money matters, frittering away his once considerable capital in aimless speculations. He and his sister had shared equally under their father's will; but while he had been at last compelled to sink the greater part of what was left to him in an annuity, she had probably increased her original inheritance.

"I shall certainly go, if you can spare me for a whole fortnight," Rachel said. "I'm all curiosity to see this remarkable aunt. By the way, how old is she?"

"There were only fifteen months between us," Mr. Deane said, "so she must be—dear me, yes; she must be seventy-three. Dear, dear! It seems so absurd to think of her as *old*——"

He continued his reflections, but Rachel was not listening. He was asking for the understanding of the young, quite unaware of his senility, reaching out over half a century to try to touch the comprehension and sympathy of his daughter, who was already bent on her own adventure, looking forward eagerly to a visit to Boston.

For this invitation had come very aptly. Rachel pondered that later in the morning, with a glow of ecstatic resignation to her charming fate. She found the guiding hand of a romantic inevitability in the fact that she and Andrew Fleming were to meet so soon. It had seemed so unlikely that they would see each other again for many months. They had only met three times; but they *knew*, although their friendship had been too green for either of them to admit the knowledge before he had gone back to town. He had, indeed, hinted far more in his two letters than he had ever dared to say. He was sensitive; he lacked self-confidence. But Rachel adored him for just those failings which she criticized so hardly in her father. She took out his letters and reread them, thrilling with the realization that in her answer she would have such a perfectly amazing surprise for him. She would refer to it quite casually, somewhere near the end. She would write, "By the way, it's just possible that we might meet again before long, for I am going to stay with my aunt, Miss Deane, in Louisburg Square." He would understand all that lay behind such an apparently careless reference, for she had told him that she "never went to Boston," had only once in her life ever been there.

She was in her own room, and she stood now before the cheval-glass and studied herself, raising her chin and slightly pursing her lips, staring superciliously at her own image under half-lowered eyelids. Candidly, she admired herself; but she could not help that assumption of a disdainful criticism. It seemed to give her confidence in her own integrity—hiding that annoying shadow of doubt which sometimes fell upon her when she caught sight of her reflection by chance and unexpectedly.

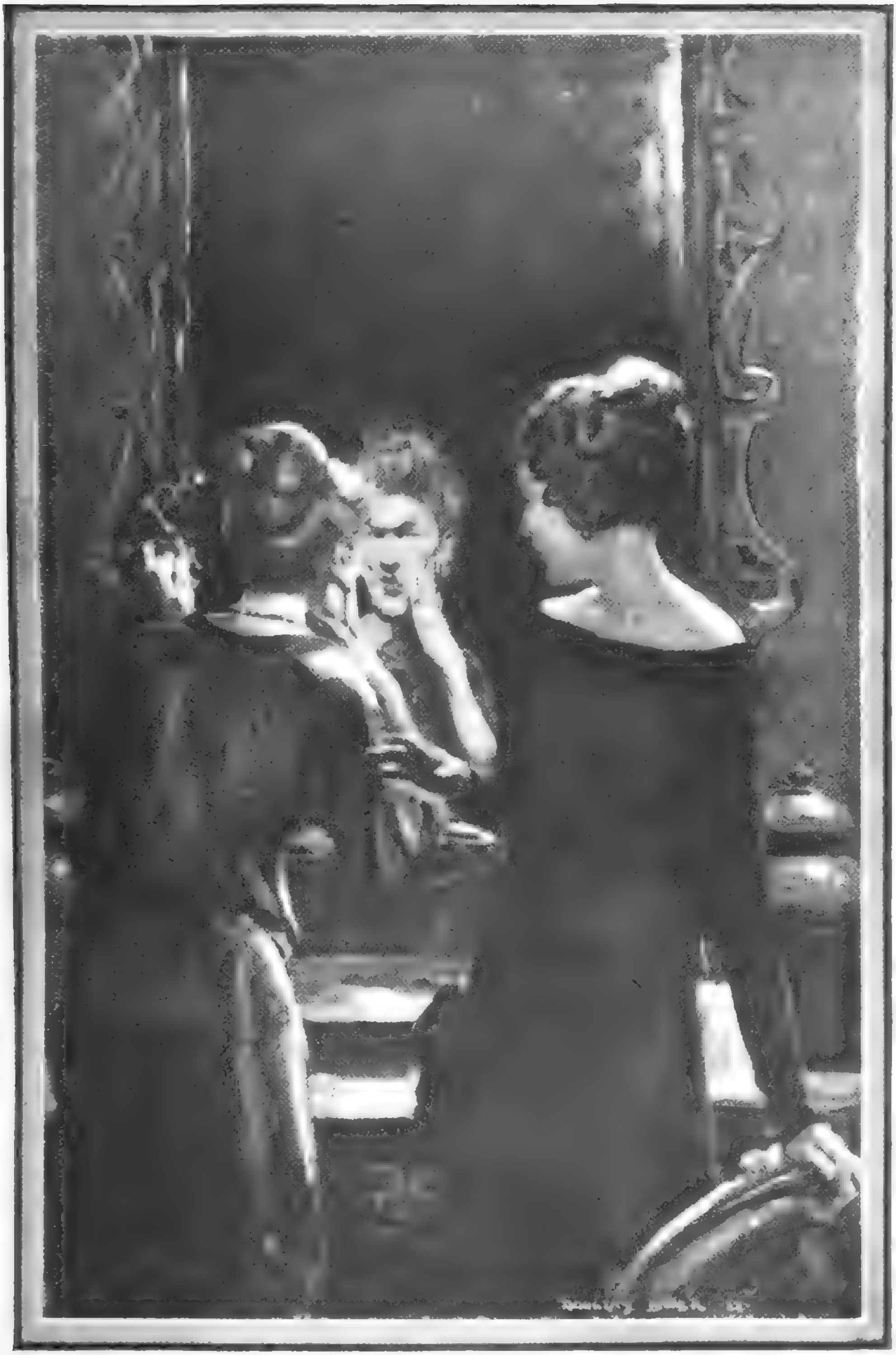
But no thought of doubt flawed her satisfaction this morning. A sense of power came to her, a tranquil realization that she could charm Andrew as she would. With a graceful, habitual gesture, she put up her hand and lightly touched her cheek with a soft, caressing movement of her finger-tips.

THE elderly parlor-maid showed Rachel straight to her bedroom when she arrived at Louisburg Square, indicating on the way the beautiful old drawing-room, in which tea and her first sight of the wonderful aunt would await Rachel in half an hour. She had been eager and excited, but she found some influence in the atmosphere of the big house that vaguely repelled and damped her.

Her bedroom was expensively furnished and beautifully kept; some of the pieces were, she supposed, genuine antiques, perhaps immensely valuable. But how could she ever feel at home there?

"Well, if ever I have a house of my own," Rachel thought, regarding these ancient splendors, "I'll furnish it with something I sha'n't be afraid of."

She was anxious and uneasy as she went slowly down-stairs to the drawing-room.



Rachel stared in horror. It seemed to her just then as if the reflection of her aunt in the mirror was indeed that of herself grown instantly and mysteriously old.

Her anticipations of this meeting with her intimidating, wealthy aunt had changed within the last half-hour. Her first idea of Miss Deane had been of a robust, stout woman, frank in her speech and inclined to be very critical of the newly found niece whom she had chosen to inspect. Now she was prepared to expect a fragile, rather querulous old lady, older even than her years—an aunt to be talked to in a lowered voice and treated with the same delicate care that must be extended to her furniture.

She entered the room almost on tiptoe, and then stood stock-still, shocked and bewildered with surprise. Whatever she had expected it was not this. For a moment she was unable to believe that the sprightly, painted and bedizened figure before her could possibly be that of her aunt, whose head was crowned with an exuberant brown wig. Her heavy eyebrows were grotesquely blackened, her hollow cheeks stiff with powder, her lips brightened to a fantastic scarlet. And she was posed there, standing before the tea-table with her head a little back, looking at her niece with a tolerant condescension, with the air of a superb young beauty, self-conscious and proud of her charms.

"Hm. So you're my semimythical niece," she said, putting up her lorgnette. "I'm glad, at any rate, to find that you're not, after all, a fabulous creature." She spoke in a high, rather thin voice that produced an effect of effort, as if she were playing on the top octave of a flute.

Rachel had never in her life felt so awkward.

"Yes—I—you know, Aunt Rachel, I had begun to wonder if you were not fabulous, too." She tried desperately to seem at ease. She was afraid to look at that grotesque figure, afraid to show by some unconscious reflex her dislike for its ugliness. As she took the bony, ring-bedecked hand that was held out to her, she kept her eyes away from her aunt's face. Miss Deane, however, would not permit that evasion.

"Hold your head up, my dear. I want to look at you," she said, and when Rachel reluctantly obeyed, continued, "Yes; you're more like *my* father than your own, which means that you're like me; for I took after him, too, so every one said."

Rachel drew in her breath with a little gasp. Was it possible that her aunt could imagine for one instant that there was any likeness between them?

"Our—our names are the same," she said nervously.

Miss Deane nodded.

"But there's more in it than that. It's good Mendelism that you should take after an aunt rather than either of your parents."

"And you really think that we are alike?" Rachel asked feebly, looking in vain for any sign of a quizzical humor in her aunt's face.

Miss Deane looked down under her half-lowered eyelids with a proud air of tolerance.

"Oh, yes, a little, without doubt," she said, as though the advantages of the difference were on her own side. "Now sit down and have your tea, my dear."

RACHEL obeyed with a vague wonder in her mind as to why that look of tolerance should be so familiar. It seemed to her as if it were something she had felt rather than seen; and as tea progressed she found herself half furtively studying the raddled ugliness of her aunt's face in the search for possible relics of a beautiful youth.

"Ah! I think you're beginning to see it, too," Miss Deane said, marking her niece's scrutiny. "It grows on one, doesn't it?"

Rachel shivered slightly.

"Yes, it does," she said experimentally, watching her aunt's face for some indication of a malicious, teasing humor.

Miss Deane, however, was faintly simpering.

"I have been told that I've changed very little," she said; and Rachel suppressed a sigh of impatience at the reflection that she was expected to play up to this absurd fantasy.

"Of course I can't judge of that," she said, "as we met for the first time five minutes ago."

"No, no; you can't judge of *that*," her aunt replied, with the half-bashful emphasis of one who awaits a compliment.

Rachel decided to plunge.

"But you do look extraordinarily young for your age," she lied desperately.

Miss Deane straightened her back and toyed with a teaspoon.

"I have always taken great care of myself," she said.

Unquestionably she believed it, Rachel decided. This was no pose, but a horrible piece of self-deception. This shriveled, repulsive creature had actually persuaded herself into the delusion that she still had the appearance of a young girl. Heaven help her if that delusion were ever shattered!

Yet outside this one obsession, Miss Deane, as Rachel soon discovered, had a clear and well-balanced mind. For now that she had received her desired assurance from this new quarter, she began to talk of other things. Her boasted "modernism," it is true, had a smack of the stiff, broadcloth savor of the 'Eighties, but she had a point of view that coincided far more nearly with Rachel's own than did that of her father. Her aunt, at least, had outlived the worst superstitions and inanities of the mid-Victorians.

INDEED by the time tea was finished Rachel's spirits were beginning to revive. She would have to be very careful in her treatment of her aunt, but on the whole it would not, perhaps, be so bad; and presently she would see Andrew again. She would almost certainly get a letter from him by the last post, making some appointment to meet her, and after that she would present him to her aunt. She had a feeling that Miss Deane would not raise any objection, that she might even welcome the visit of a young man at her house.

The time was passing so easily that Rachel was surprised when she heard the gong sound.

"Does that mean it's time to dress already?" she asked.

"You've an hour before dinner," Miss Deane said, "but I'll go up now. I like to be leisurely over my *toilette.*"

She rose as she spoke, but as she crossed the room, she paused with what seemed to be a little jerk of surprise as she caught sight of her own reflection in a tall mirror above one of the gilt-legged console-tables against the wall. Then she deliberately stopped, turned and surveyed herself, half contemptuously, under lowered eyelids, with a set of her head and back that belied plainly enough the pout of her critical lips. And having admired that haggard image, she lifted her wasted hand and delicately touched her whitened, hollow cheeks with the tips of her heavily jeweled fingers.

Rachel stared in horror. It seemed to her just then as if the reflection of her aunt in the mirror was indeed that of herself grown instantly and mysteriously old. She saw that her father had been right. Once, incalculable ages ago, this repulsive old woman might have been very like herself.

But when, with an effect of challenge, she scrutinized her reflection in the tall cheval-glass in her bedroom, the likeness appeared to have vanished. She saw her head thrust a little forward, her arms stiff, and in her whole pose an air of vigorous defiance. She was prepared to admit that she was ugly at that moment if the ugliness was of another kind than that she had seen downstairs. No! She drew herself up, more than a little relieved at the result of her test. The likeness was all a fancy, the result of suggestions, first by her father and then by Miss Deane herself. And she need at least have no fear that she was ugly. Why——

She paused suddenly and the light died out of her face. Her image was looking back at her stiffly, superciliously, with, so it seemed to her, the contemptible simper of one who still fatuously admires the thing that has long since lost its charm. She caught her breath and clenched her hands, drawing down her rather heavy eyebrows in an expression of angry scorn. "Oh, never, never, never again will I look at myself like that!" Rachel vowed fiercely.

She was to find, however, before this first evening was over, that the mere avoidance of that one pose before the mirror would not suffice to lay the ghost of the suspicion that was beginning to haunt her.

At the very outset, a new version of the likeness was presented to her when, during the first course of dinner, Miss Deane, with a lowering frown of her blackened eyebrows, found occasion to reprimand the elderly parlor-maid. For a moment Rachel was again puzzled by the intriguing sense of the familiar before she remembered her own scowl at the looking-glass an hour before. "Do I really frown like that?" she thought. And on the instant found herself *feeling* like her aunt.

That, indeed, was the horror that, despite every effort of resistance, deepened steadily as the evening wore on. Miss Deane had, without question, lost every trace of her beauty; but her character, her spirit were unchanged, and they were, so Rachel increasingly believed, the very replicas of her own.

Moreover, with that growing recognition

of likeness in character, there came the thought that she in time might look even as her aunt looked at this present moment. She also would lose her beauty until no facial resemblance could be traced between the hag she was and the beauty she had once been. For, through all her torment, Rachel proudly clung to the certainty that, physically at least, there was no sort of likeness between her aunt and herself.

Miss Deane's belief in that matter, however, was soon proved to be otherwise; for when they were alone together in the drawing-room after dinner and the topic so inevitably present to both their minds came to the surface of conversation, she unexpectedly said,

"But we're evidently the poles apart in character and manner, my dear."

"Oh, do you think so?" Rachel exclaimed. "It's a queer thing to say, perhaps, but I curiously feel like you, Aunt Rachel, when you speak sometimes and—and when I watch the way you do things."

Miss Deane shook her head.

"I admit the physical resemblance," she said; "otherwise, my dear, we are utterly different."

Did she, too, Rachel wondered, resent the aspersion of her integrity?

By the last post Rachel received her expected letter from Andrew Fleming. Her aunt separated it from the others brought in by the maid and passed it across to her niece with a slight hint of displeasure in her face.

"Miss Rachel Deane, *junior*," she said. "Really it hadn't occurred to me how difficult it will be to distinguish our letters. I hope my friends won't take to addressing me as Miss Deane, *senior*. Properly, of course, I am Miss Deane, and you Miss Rachel, but I'll admit there's sure to be some confusion. Now, my dear, I expect you're tired. You'd better run up to bed."

RACHEL was willing enough to go. She was glad to have an opportunity to read her letter in solitude; she was even more glad to get away from the company of this living echo of herself. "I believe I should go mad if I had to live with her," she reflected. "I should get into the way of copying her. I should begin to grow old before my time."

When she reached her bedroom, she put her letter unopened on the toilet-table and once more stared searchingly at her own reflection in the mirror. Was there any least trace of a physical likeness, she asked herself. She shrugged her shoulders. If there were, indeed, any sort of facial resemblance between herself and her aunt, no one would ever see it except Miss Deane, and she was obsessed with a senile vanity. Yet might she not in time suffer from it herself? The change would be so slow, so infinitely gradual; and always one would be cherishing the old, loved image of youth and beauty, falling in love with it, like a deluded Hyacinth, and coming to be deceived by the fantasy of an unchanging appearance of youth. No doubt her aunt—perhaps searching her own image in the mirror at this moment—saw not herself but a picture of her niece. She was hypnotized by the suggestion of a pose and the desire of her own mind. In time Rachel herself might also become the victim of a similar illusion!

Oh, it was horrible! With a shudder she picked up her letter and turned away from the looking-glass. She would forget that ghastly warning. She would think of Andrew and of her next meeting with him. She opened her letter to find that he had, rather timorously, suggested that she should meet him the next afternoon—at Frog Pond in the Common at three o'clock, if he heard nothing from her in the mean time.

For a few minutes she lost herself in delightful anticipation, and then slowly, insidiously, a new speculation crept into her mind. What would be the effect upon Andrew if he saw her and her aunt together? Would he recognize the likeness, and, anticipating the movement of more than half a century, see her in one amazing moment as she would presently become? And, in any case, what a terrible train of suggestion might not be started in his mind by the impression left upon him by the old woman! Once he had seen Miss Deane, Rachel's every gesture would serve to remind him of that repulsive image of raddled, deluded age. It might well be that in time he would come to see Rachel as she would presently be rather than as she was. It would be a hideous reversal of the old romance; instead of seeing the girl in the old woman, he would foresee the harridan in the girl!

It would be nothing less than folly to

let Andrew and her aunt meet, Rachel decided.

RACHEL had believed on the first night of her arrival in Louisburg Square that, so far as her love-affair was concerned, she would be able to avoid all danger by keeping her lover and her aunt unknown to each other. She very soon found, however, that the spell Miss Deane seemed to have put upon her was not to be laid by any effect of mere distance.

She and Andrew met rather shyly at their first appointment. Both of them were a little conscious of having been overbold, one for having suggested and the other for having agreed to so significant an assignation. And for the first few minutes their talk was nothing but a quick, nervous reminiscence of their earlier meetings. They had to recover the lost ground on which they had parted before they could go on to any more intimate knowledge of each other.

But Rachel found it very difficult to recover that lost ground. She knew that she was being unnecessarily distant and cold, and though she inwardly accused herself of "putting on absurd airs," her manner, as she was uncomfortably aware, remained at once stilted and detached.

"I suppose it's because I'm self-conscious before all these people," she thought, and, indeed, the Common was very full that afternoon.

And it was Andrew who first, a little desperately, tried to reach across the barrier that was dividing them.

"You're different, rather, in town," he began shyly. "Is it the effect of your aunt's grandeurs?"

"Am I different? I feel exactly the same," Rachel replied mechanically.

"You didn't think it was rather impudent of me to ask you to meet me here, did you?" he went on anxiously.

She shook her head emphatically.

"Oh, no; it wasn't that," she said.

"But then you admit that it was—something?" he pleaded.

"The people, perhaps," she admitted. "I—I feel so exposed to the public view."

"We might walk across the garden if you prefer it," he suggested, "and have tea. I know a quiet place not far from here."

She agreed to that willingly. She wanted to be alone with him.

They cut across the garden and suddenly decided to take a taxi and ride up the avenue to the Plaza. Here at least they were quite unwatched, but still Rachel found it impossible to regain the relations that had existed between her and Andrew when they had parted a month earlier. And Andrew, too, it seemed, was staring at her with a new, inquisitive scrutiny.

"Why do you look at me like that?" she broke out at last. "Do you notice any difference in me, or what? You—you've been staring so."

"Difference?" he repeated. "Well, I told you just now—didn't I?—that you were different this afternoon."

"Yes; but in what way?" she asked. "Do I—do I look different?"

He paused a little over his answer.

"N-no," he hesitated. "There's something, though. Don't be offended—will you?—if I say that you don't seem to be quite yourself to-day, not quite natural. I miss a rather characteristic expression of yours. You've never once looked at me with that rather tolerating air you used to put on."

"It was a horrid air," she said sharply. "I've made up my mind to cure myself of it."

"Oh, no; don't!" he protested. "It wasn't at all horrid. It was—don't think I'm trying to pay you a compliment—it was, well, charming. I've missed it dreadfully."

She determined to try an experiment.

"This sort of air, do you mean?" she asked, and with a sickening sensation of presenting the very gestures and appearance of her aunt, she regarded him under lowered eyelids with an expression of faintly supercilious approval.

His smile at once thanked and answered her.

"But it's an abominable look!" she exclaimed. "The look of an old, old, painted woman, vain, ridiculous."

He stared at her in amazement.

"How absurd!" he protested. "Why, it's *you*, and you're certainly not old or painted or unduly vain, and no one could say you were ridiculous."

"And you *want* me to look like that?" she asked.

"It's—it's so *you*," he said shyly.

"But, just suppose," she tried, "that I went on looking like that after I'd grown old and ugly. Think how hateful it would be to see a hideous old woman posturing and pretending and making eyes! And, you see, if one gets a habit, it's so hard to get rid of it. Think of me at seventy, all painted and powdered, trying to seem as if I hadn't altered and really believing I hadn't!"

He laughed that pleasant, kind laugh of his which had been one of the first things in him that had so attracted her.

"Oh, I'll chance the future," he said. "Besides, if—if it could ever happen that—that your growing old came to me gradually, that I should be seeing you every day, I mean, I shouldn't notice it. I should be old, too; and *I* should think you hadn't altered, either." He was afraid, as yet, to be too plain-spoken, but his tone made it quite clear that he asked for no greater happiness than that of seeing her grow old beside him.

She did not pretend to misunderstand him.

"Would you? Perhaps you would," she said. "But, all the same, I don't think you need insist on that particular—pose."

He passed that by, too eager at the moment to claim the concession she had offered him.

"Is there any hope that I may be allowed to—to watch you grow old?" he asked.

"Perhaps—if you'll let me do it in my own way," Rachel said.

Andrew shyly took her hand.

"You mean that you will—that you don't mind?" He put the question as if he had no doubt of its intelligibility—to her.

She nodded.

"When did you begin to know?" he asked, awed by the wonder of this stupendous thing that had happened to him.

"From the beginning, I think," Rachel murmured.

"So did I, from the very beginning," he agreed, and from that they dropped into sacred reminiscences and comparisons concerning the innumerable things they had adoringly seen in each other and had had as yet no opportunity to glory in.

And in the midst of all these new and bewildering, embarrassing, delightful revelations and discoveries, Rachel completely forgot the shadow that was haunting her, forgot how she looked or felt or acted, forgot that there was or had ever been a terrible old woman who lived in Louisburg Square and whose hold on life was maintained by her horrible mimicry of youth. And then, in a moment, she was lifted out of her dream and cruelly set down on the hard, unsympathetic earth by the sound of her lover's voice.

"I suppose I'll have to meet your aunt," he was saying. "Shall we go back there now and tell her?"

Rachel flushed,

"Oh, no!" she ejaculated impulsively.

Andrew looked his surprise.

"But why not?" he asked. "I'm—I'm a perfectly respectable, eligible party."

"I wasn't thinking of that," Rachel said.

"Is she a terrible dragon?" he inquired, with a smile.

Rachel shook her head.

"She's odd, rather. She might prefer my giving her some kind of notice," she said.

He accepted that without hesitation.

"Will you warn her, then?" he said. "And I'll come and do my duty to-morrow. I understand she's a lady to be propitiated."

"Not to-morrow," Rachel said.

The irk and disgust of it all had returned to her with renewed force at the first mention of her aunt's name. The thought of Miss Deane had revived the repulsive sense of acting, speaking, looking like that aged caricature of herself. Yet she wanted, strangely enough, to get back to Louisburg Square; for only there, it seemed to her, was she safe from the examination of an inquisitive stare that might at any moment penetrate her secret and reveal her as a posturing hag masquerading in the alluring freshness of a young girl.

"I ought to be going back to her now," she said.

"But you promised that we should have tea together," Andrew remonstrated.

"Yes, I know; but please don't pester me. I'll see you again to-morrow," Rachel returned, with a touch of elderly hauteur. And, despite all his entreaties, she would not be persuaded to change her mind. Already he was looking at her with a touch of suspicion, she thought; and as she checked his remonstrances, she was aware of doing it with the air, the tone, the very look that were her inheritance from endless generations of precisely similar ancestors.

IF SHE could but have lived a double life, Rachel thought, her present position might have been endurable and then, in a few months or even weeks, the problem would be solved forever by her marriage with Andrew and the final obliteration of Miss Deane from her memory. But she could not live a double life. Day by day, as her intimacy with her aunt increased, Rachel found it more difficult to forget her when she was away from Louisburg Square. In the deepest and most beautiful moments of her intercourse with Andrew, she was aware of practising upon him a subtle deception, of pretending that she was other than she was in reality—an awareness that was constantly pricked and stimulated by the continually growing consciousness of her likeness to Miss Deane.

Miss Deane, on her part, evidently took a great pleasure in her niece's society. The fortnight of her original invitation had already been exceeded, but she would not hear of Rachel's returning home.

"Why should you go back?" she demanded scornfully. "Your father doesn't want you—Richard is one of those slipshod people who prefer to live alone. I used to try and stir him up, and he ran away from me. He'll run away from you, my dear, in a few years' time. He hasn't the courage to stand up to women like us."

Miss Deane unquestionably wanted her niece to stay with her. She was even beginning to hint at the desirability of making the present arrangement a permanent one.

Rachel, however, was not flattered by this display of pleasure in her society. She knew that it was due to no individual charm of her own, but to the fact that she had become her aunt's mirror. For Miss Deane no longer, in Rachel's presence, at least, gazed at herself in the looking-glass. She gazed at her niece instead. And as Rachel endured the posings and simperings, the alternate adoration and fond contempt with which her aunt regarded her, she was unable to resist the impulse to reflect them.

Every day she fell a little lower in that weakness, and however slight the likeness had once been, she knew that now it must be patent to every observer. She copied her aunt, mimicked, duplicated her. It was easier to do that than to fight the resemblance against her aunt's determination; and so, by unnoticed degrees, she had permitted herself to become a lay figure upon which was dressed the image of Miss Deane's youth. She had even come to desire the look of almost sensual gratification on her aunt's face when she saw her niece so perfectly reflecting her own well-remembered airs.

And Rachel, too, had come to avoid the looking-glass—dreading to see there the poses and gesticulations of the old, repulsive woman whose every feature and expression had become so sickeningly familiar.

AND in all that time Andrew had not once been to the house in Louisburg Square. Rachel had kept him away by what she felt had become all too transparent excuses. That terror at least, she felt, must be kept at bay. For she could not conceive it possible that, once he had seen her and her aunt together, he could retain one spark of his admiration.

Nevertheless, the day came when Rachel could no longer endure to deceive him. He had challenged her at last with hiding something from him. Inevitably he had become increasingly curious about her strange reticences concerning the Miss Deane whom he, in turn, had grown to regard as almost mythical; and all his suppressed suspicions had suddenly found expression in a question.

"What are you hiding? Do you really live with your aunt in Louisburg Square?" he had asked that day, with all the fierce intensity of a jealous lover.

Rachel had been stirred to a quick response.

"Oh, if you don't believe me, you'd better come and see for yourself," she had said. "Come this afternoon—to tea." And afterward, even when Andrew had humbly sought to make amends for his unwarrantable jealousy, she had stuck to that invitation. The moment that she had issued it she had had a sense of relief, a sense of having gratefully confessed her weakness. Andrew's visit would consummate that confession, and thereafter she would have no further secrets from him. And if he found that he could no longer love her after he had seen her as she was, well, it would be better in the end than that he should marry a simulacrum and make the discovery by slow degrees.

"Yes; come this afternoon. We shall expect you about four," had been her last words to him. And now she had to tell her aunt, who was still unaware that such a person as Andrew Fleming existed. Rachel postponed the telling until after lunch. Her knowledge of Miss Deane, though in some respects it equaled her knowledge of her own mind, did not tell her how her aunt would take this particular piece of news. She might possibly, Rachel thought, be annoyed, fearful lest her beloved looking-glass should be stolen from her. But she could wait no longer.

"I've something to tell you, aunt," Rachel began abruptly.

Miss Deane put up her lorgnette and surveyed her lovely portrait with an interested air.

"Aunt Rachel—I've never told you, and I know I ought to have," Rachel blurted out. "But I'm—I'm engaged to a Mr. Andrew Fleming, and he's coming here to call on you—to call on us, this afternoon at four o'clock."

Miss Deane closed her eyes and gave a little sigh.

"You might have given me *rather* longer notice, dear," she said.

"It isn't two yet," Rachel replied. "There are more than two hours to get ready for him."

Miss Deane bridled slightly.

"I must have my rest before he comes," she said, and added, "I suppose you've told him about us, dear?"

"About *you?*" Rachel asked.

Miss Deane nodded complacently.

"Well, not very much," Rachel admitted.

Miss Deane's look as she playfully threatened Rachel with her long-handled lorgnette was distinctly sly.

"Then he doesn't know yet that there are two of us?" she simpered. "Won't it be just a little bit of a shock to him, my dear?"

Rachel drew a long breath and leaned back in her chair.

"Yes," she said curtly; "I expect it will."

NEVER before had the realization of that strange likeness seemed so intolerable as at that moment. Even now her aunt was looking at her with the very air and gesture which had once charmed her in her own reflection, and that she knew still charmed and fascinated her lover. It was an air and gesture of which she could never break herself. It was natural to her, a true expression of something ineradicable in her being. Indeed, one of the worst penalties imposed upon her during the past month had been the omission of those pleasant ceremonies before the mirror. She had somehow missed herself, lost the sweetest and most adorable of companions.

Miss Deane got up and, holding herself very erect, moved with a little mincing step toward the tall mirror over the console-table. Rachel held her breath. She saw that her aunt, suddenly roused by this thought of the coming lover, was returning mechanically to her old habit of self-admiration. Was it possible, Rachel wondered, that the sight of the image she would see in the looking-glass, contrasted now with the memories of the living reflection she had so intimately studied for the past four weeks, might shock her into a realization of the starkly hideous truth?

But it seemed that the aged woman must be blind. She gave no start of surprise as she paused before the glass; she showed no sign of anxiety concerning the vision she saw there. Her left hand, in which she held her lorgnette, had fallen to her side, and with the finger-tips of her right she daintily caressed the hollows of her sunken cheeks. She stayed there until Rachel, unable to endure the sight any longer and with some vague purpose of defiance in her mind, jumped to her feet, crossed the room and stood shoulder by shoulder with her aunt, staring into the glass.

For a moment Miss Deane did not move; then, with a queer hesitation, she dropped her right hand and slowly lifted her lorgnette.

Rachel felt a cold chill of horror invading her. Something fearful and terrible was happening before her eyes; her aunt was shrinking, withering, growing old in a moment. The stiffness had gone out of her pose; her head had begun to droop; the proud contempt in her face was giving way to the moping, resentful reminiscence of the aged. She still held up her lorgnette, still stared half fearfully at the glaring contrast that was presented to her, but her hand and arm had begun to tremble under the strain, and instant by instant all life and vigor seemed to be draining away from her.

Then suddenly, with a fierce effort, she turned away her head, straightened herself and walked over to the door, passing out with a high, thin crackle of laughter that had in it the suggestion of a vehement, petulant derision, of a bitterness outmastering control.

Rachel shivered, but held her ground before the mirror. She had nothing to fear from that contemplation. As for her aunt, she had had her day. It was time she knew the truth.

"She *had* to know," Rachel repeated, addressing the dear likeness that so proudly reflected her.

She found consolation in that thought. Her aunt *had* to know, and Rachel herself was only the chance instrument of the revelation. She had not *meant*, so she persisted, to do more than vindicate her own integrity.

Nevertheless, her own passionate problem was not yet solved. Her aunt would not, so Rachel believed, give way without a struggle. Had she not made a gallant effort at recovery even as she left the room, and would she not make a still greater effort while Andrew was there, assert her rivalry, if only in revenge?

She must meet that, Rachel decided, by presenting a contrast. She would be meek and humble in her aunt's presence. Andrew might recognize the admired airs and gestures in those of the old woman, but he should at least have no opportunity to compare them.

And it was with this thought and intention in her mind that Rachel received him when he arrived with a lover's promptness a little before four o'clock.

"Are you so dreadfully nervous?" he asked her when they were alone together in the drawing-room. "You're like you were that first day we met in town—different from your usual self."

"Oh, what a memory you have for my looks and behavior!" she replied pettishly. "Of course I'm nervous."

He tried to argue with her, questioning her as to Miss Deane's probable reception of him, but she refused to answer him.

"You'll see for yourself in a few minutes," she said; but the minutes passed and still Miss Deane did not come.

At a quarter to five the elderly parlormaid brought in tea.

"Miss Deane said you were not to wait for her, Miss Rachel," was the message she delivered. "She'll be down presently, I was to say."

Rachel could not suppress a scornful twist of her mouth. She had no doubt that her aunt was taking very special pains with her toilet, trying to obliterate, perhaps, her recent vision before the glass.

"Oh, why doesn't she come and let me get it over?" she passionately demanded, and even as she spoke she heard the sounds of some one coming down the stairs, not the accustomed sounds of her aunt's finicking, high-heeled steps, but a shuffling and creaking, accompanied by the murmurs of a weak, protesting voice.

Rachel jumped to her feet. She knew everything, then, before the door opened and she saw first of all the shocked, scared face of the elderly parlor-maid who supported the crumpled, palsied figure of the old, old woman who three hours before had been so miraculously young, magically upheld and supported then by the omnipotent strength of an idea.

She only stayed in the drawing-room for five minutes—a querulous, resentful old lady, malignantly jealous, so it seemed, of their vigor and impatient of their sympathy.

When the parlor-maid had been sent for and Miss Deane had gone, Rachel stood up and looked down at Andrew with all her old hauteur.

"Can you realize," she asked, "that once my aunt was supposed to be very, very like me?"

He smiled and shook his head as if the possibility was too absurd to contemplate.

Rachel turned and looked at herself in the glass.

"Some day I may be as she is now," she said, with the superb, contemptuous arrogance of youth.

Andrew was watching her with adoration.

"You will never grow old," he said.

"So long as one does not get the idea of growing old into one's head—" Rachel began speculatively.

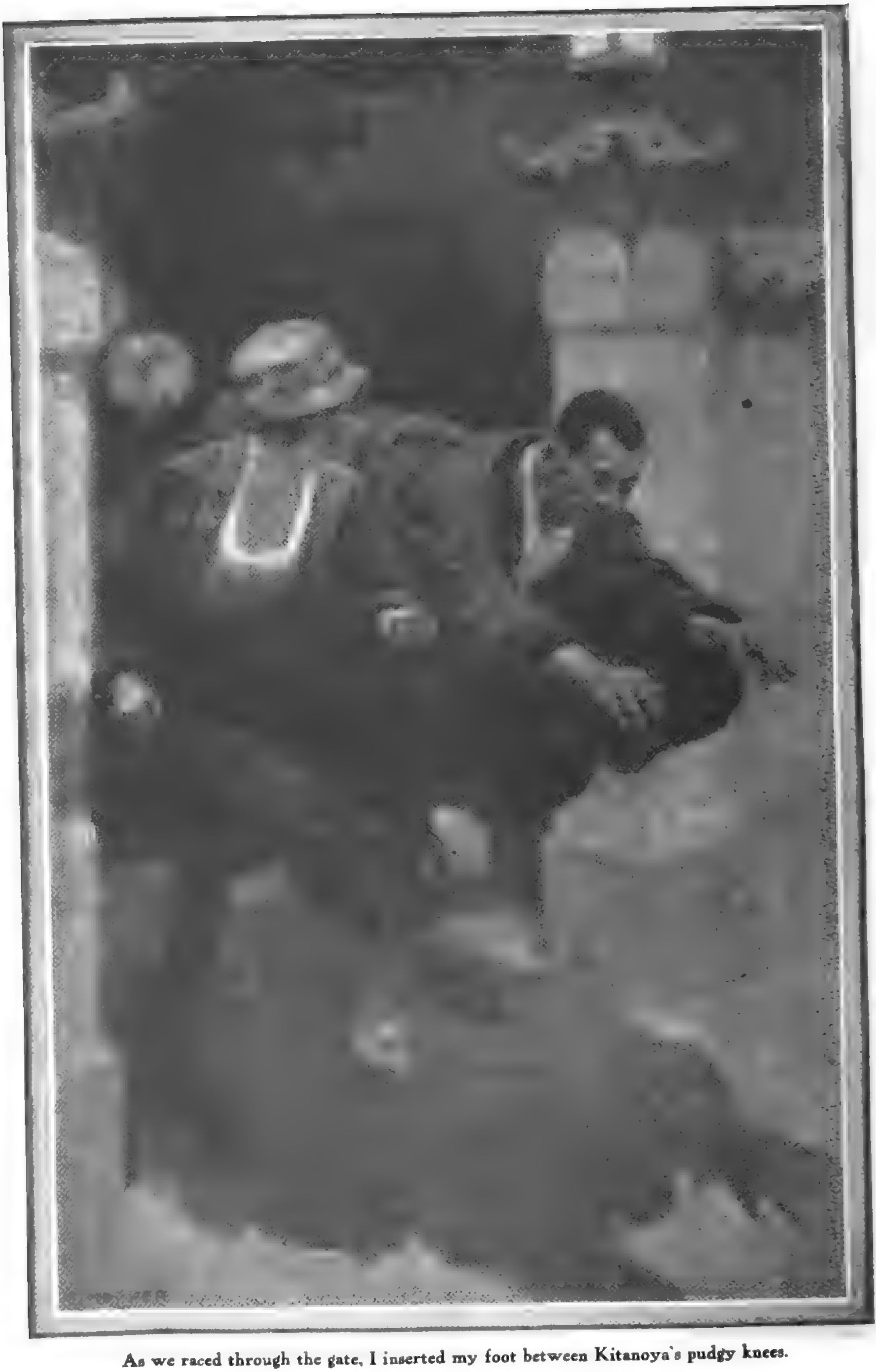
BUT Miss Deane had got the idea so strongly now that she died that night.

Rachel was with her at the last.

The old woman was trying to mouth a text from the Bible.

"What did you say, dear?" Rachel murmured, bending over her, and caught enough of the answer to guess that Miss Deane was mumbling again and again,

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face——"



As we raced through the gate, I inserted my foot between Kitanoya's pudgy knees.

# Everything *Save* Honor

*A Novelette by the Author of "Brooders," "That Lovely Bounder," etc.*

*Imagine Taking Your Bride on a Combination Honeymoon and Business Trip to Japan When You Knew as Much about the Orient as a Newly Born Occidental Babe! Wouldn't You Expect Adventure and—Fun—the Post-mortem Kind?*

## By Walter De Leon

Illustrations by E. Hopper

I BELIEVE nothing—except possibly travel—is so broadening and gratifying as married life, presenting, as it does, such an opportunity for a woman to become an intregal part of her husband's existence, socially, morally and in business. Paul and I have just returned from our Japanese honeymoon; in fact, when my husband learned that he had to go on business to Japan—he wasn't my husband then—I suggested to him,

"What a romantic place to spend a honeymoon!"

Paul said,

"Yes; but——"

I stopped him right there.

"Paul dear," I said, "I know exactly what you're thinking. You hesitate to take me so far from home and among strange aliens. But," I said, "I've read so many stories and seen so many movies of Japan that it won't seem strange to me at all. And besides," I said, "I had a few words with Mr. Riley to-day." (Mr. Riley was the vice-president at the bank where I had the switchboard. I have a perfect telephone-voice and am always in demand by big corporations.) "Anyway," I said, "I had a few words with Mr. Riley to-day and resigned from my position."

"Oh," said Paul, in his quiet manner.

"I knew you'd be glad to hear it," I continued, "because you have been begging and teasing me to quit for a long time. I hated to leave the bank in the lurch, but to-day, when Mr. Riley, in his cold, hard manner, passed a remark in my hearing that employees of the bank were supposed to confine their activities to their own departments, and, furthermore, that however friendly employees might be with each other, the details of their departments should remain secret with them, I knew he was referring to me.

"So I spoke right up. I said, 'Mr. Riley, are you a married man?' 'No,' he said. 'Well,' I said, 'if you were, wouldn't you expect your wife to give you all the aid and comfort she could? Though not yet a wife,' I said, 'I expect soon to be, and if you are referring to the case of those Japanese letters of credit a few months ago, certain information about them was extremely important to my future husband. As such, I deemed it no less than my duty to assist him,' I said, 'and if that isn't perfectly satisfactory to you, Mr. Riley,' I said, 'I can put my hat and coat on and go home immediately.'

" 'If you please,' said Mr. Riley, walking away.

"Of course, after that I wouldn't deign to explain to him the terrible deception which Mr. Kudo Kitanoya practised on your firm, Paul, with his letters of credit."

"No," Paul said; "it wouldn't have done any good."

My husband—at that time he wasn't my husband, although I knew it was only a question of time and opportunity before our two lives should be melted into one—was the chief erection and consulting engineer for the Holstein Dairy Machinery Company, manufacturing and selling pasteurizing plants. Everybody that knows anything about the dairy-machinery business doesn't have to be told what it is. As Paul asks, "What is it about the cow that all her products attract the profiteers?"

Paul did no actual selling, although in certain cases he recommended to the customer what he should buy, for which he received a commission in addition to his salary.

For instance, the day Mr. Kitanoya came into the office with the catalogues of several rival machinery companies under his arm and told Mr. Phillson, the sales-manager, that he was thinking of buying a pasteurizing plant for his place near Yokohama, Japan, Mr. Phillson called Paul in to talk over the capacity and size plant Mr. Kitanoya needed while he telephoned the bank to inquire about the letter of credit for seven thousand dollars which the Jap had exhibited. That is how I first became interested—hearing Mr. Phillson's questions over the 'phone.

THAT night, when Paul came to take me to a movie, he looked worried, and his replies to my sprightly remarks were vague and indifferent.

"What's troubling you, Paul?" I asked, tactfully drawing him out.

"It's that Jap contract," he replied, scowling in his handsome manner. Paul is six feet tall and noble in bearing, with soulful brown eyes and a cute cowlick. "Kitanoya doesn't speak very much English. He understands it fairly well, though, so I managed to learn what his needs are. That started my row with Phillson."

Paul went on to say that immediately Kitanoya left the office, after making an appointment for the following day, Phillson went to Paul and said,

"Well, what are we going to sell Kitanoya for seven thousand dollars?"

"Well," Paul answered, "our number-two plant is rated the capacity he needs. But we know it won't deliver its rated capacity. Of course it's going to be operated in Japan, which is only ten thousand miles away, and if Kitanoya complains it isn't delivering capacity, we can blame it on the way he's running it. But don't forget he's demanding a guarantee."

"I know it," Phillson frowned; "but our number-two plant costs us only twenty-six hundred."

"All right," Paul returned; "but our number-three plant, while costing more to operate and subject to frequent breakdowns after the first three months, will easily cover Kitanoya's demands, thus protecting our guarantee. And it only costs us thirty-two fifty."

"True, Paul," replied Phillson; "but why throw away that six hundred and fifty dollars?"

"On account of future business. Japan is virgin territory. Kitanoya told me he personally intends to buy three or four more plants before the year is out. Even if you could slip a joker into our guarantee, by selling him a machine that will do the work he wants we'll open up a new and prosperous field for our junk."

But it seemed that Mr. Phillson had disagreed. I had listened attentively to Paul, feeling sure that my woman's intuition would suggest a way out of his difficulty.

"If you only knew what your competitors were asking for their machinery, you'd know what to do, wouldn't you, Paul?"

"What? What's that got to do with whether we sell him a number-two or a number-three plant?"

"Why, your competitors are debating the same question, aren't they, Paul dear? Mr. Kitanoya has visited them all, and doubtless has their bids. If I were you——"

"Birdie," Paul interrupted—Paul always calls me "Birdie" because he says I never light anywhere but what I twitter gaily for a moment and then joyously flit away—"Birdie, you've given me an idea. I'll destroy competition and put it up to

Kitanoya by offering him his choice of machines at five per cent. under the lowest bid of our competitors. Knowing them as I do, I'm playing very safe. Our price is ten per cent. lower than any of them, anyway."

A few days later, Mr. Kitanoya signed a contract for the number-three plant for sixty-six hundred and fifty, and he to pay the freight to Japan.

The very next day I discovered the dishonest trick he had played. I happened to overhear a telephone conversation between the Japanese consul and our foreign-exchange manager which revealed that Mr. Kitanoya had brought over three separate letters of credit, one for seven thousand, one for ten thousand and one for twelve thousand five hundred dollars. Mary Malone, the stenographer in the f.-e. department is my dearest friend, and she confirmed the startling news at lunch that day.

When I told Paul, he was simply furious at Kitanoya for showing him only the seven-thousand-dollar letter.

"No good will come of it," he warned me. "You mark my words, Birdie, dishonesty is its own worst enemy. A man that will do a thing like that will do worse."

LITTLE did I dream as I listened to that prophecy how much worse Mr. Kitanoya would do to my stalwart husband. Little did I dream how love, that most precious of all womanly emotions, would guide me to the rescue, and, after it had brought two other longing hearts into blissful union, it would lead Paul and me, triumphant and richer in everything save honor, out upon the blue highway of the Pacific, far from the evil schemes and smells of the land of the Rising Sun.

Anyway, the months passed until one day Mr. Phillson showed Paul a letter. It was from Mr. Kitanoya, stating that something was wrong with the pasteurizing plant they'd sold him, and to please send Paul over at Kitanoya's expense to locate and rectify the trouble, as per guarantee. Paul and I decided it was an auspicious moment to be wedded, as all the time he was traveling at the Jap's expense he'd be on the company's pay-roll and still, going to and coming from Japan, have ample time to devote to honeymooning. As far as my expenses were concerned, "Paul," I said, "you know two can live almost as cheaply as one."

"Don't worry, Birdie." Paul patted my shoulder. "I've had a world of experience with expense-accounts."

What a striking contrast my husband and I made as we stood under the starry vault of the Grand Central Station bidding farewell to our friends after the wedding! Paul so tall and dark and austere and distinguished, and little me with golden hair and sparkling blue eyes in a gray imported French model, as Mary Malone remarked, "radiating light-heartedness and happiness," tempered with the touch of solemnity which the occasion demanded.

"I can see where you're going to be a great help to Paul," Mr. Phillson said, looking at the ring on my left hand.

"His career shall be my career," I answered. "From now on we are one."

"Which one?" asked Mr. Phillson, in that air of hectic gaiety frequently found at weddings.

Honolulu-bound, glorious days and tropical nights followed in ecstatic succession aboard the steamer. The weather was perfect, and before we were out of San Francisco two days, I met and talked with every one of the first-class passengers. Paul won several pools guessing the number of knots the steamer made daily, which I thought a bit unfair because of his knowledge of machinery and engineering. But Paul, who had been raised in a Methodist family, quoted the Bible: "To him that hath shall be given."

"By the way, Paul," I said one day, after he had dumped his winnings in my lap, "just what is a pasteurizing plant?"

"It's a tree of the knowledge of good and evil under which crooks sit and fatten while the juice of the cow is being subjected to outrageous treatment which——"

"You'd better stick to rye, Paul dear," I smiled. "You're more used to it."

Paul laughed and kissed me; and I will say that Scotch impregnates the breath not nearly so poignantly as other liquors.

"Birdie, the pasteurization process is one for purifying and preserving milk. There are many tricks concealed in it for extracting a surplus of cream and yet leaving enough butter-fat in the milk to conform with Health Board regulations. And while I am on the subject, speaking by and large, the only difference between Grade A and Grade B bottled milk is in the price. The cream-line—the collar of cream for which the honest and intelligent housewife looks anxiously—can be regulated in the process, so that while you may imagine you're getting a richer milk, you're simply looking at a milk which has been mistreated in such a manner that *all* its cream rises to the surface. Are you still awake, Birdie?"

"Of course. If I am to fully share your life and your work, I think I should know something about it, dear."

"It's the study of a lifetime," Paul said. "However, the process, briefly, is to raise milk to a temperature of between a hundred and forty and a hundred and forty-five degrees and keep it at that temperature for approximately half an hour."

"It sounds simple enough."

"It is. But when I explain that, in the hands of a competent dairyman, a can of sour milk can be turned sweet again by flashing it—that is, by very rapidly raising its temperature to——"

"Paul," I interrupted, "you're joking!"

"No, Birdie; it's the truth," Paul declared, his brown eyes glowing with honesty. "I worked for nearly a year before I discovered the exact temperature at which to hold it and the time it took to kill the little germs which make milk taste sour."

IT IS really an entrancing sight steaming up the bay into Yokohama, or at least it was the morning Paul and I stood on the deck watching the little fishing-boats with their funny square sails darting hither and yon, looking over the island, green and hilly like California, and in the distance Fuji, appearing big and heavy for a mountain-top, and actually pinkish in color with the sun's slanting rays on its snow-filled crags.

"Yes, Paul," I said; "we made no mistake coming here for our honeymoon. It all looks so quaint and quiet and peculiar."

"'Peculiar' is right," my husband returned in a tone of voice I couldn't fathom.

"Just how do you mean that?" I smiled, leaving the way clear for any confidence he might wish to make.

"There are plenty of engineers in Japan, also mechanics. There's nothing so complicated about our pasteurizing plant that Kitanoya had to send all the way to New York for me. It's peculiar."

"You think he is harboring an ulterior motive?" I asked.

"I think he is cooking something," my husband answered in his direct manner.

Just then the boat dropped anchor, and after some fuss with Imperial Government inspectors we went ashore.

In the hundreds of novels I had read at different switchboards, the trait of character always attributed to the Japanese was secretiveness. I realized why an entire nation was thus afflicted the moment we landed. Literally scores of rickshaws were clustered about, the Japs standing between the shafts of each, calling vociferously for patronage. But though I carefully scanned them all, I saw none which would accommodate more than one passenger. In Japan, one always travels, even on a shopping-tour, in a rickshaw. Traveling in a rickshaw means traveling alone. Hence the national habit of talking to oneself and thus preserving one's thoughts.

Mr. Kitanoya was waiting at the Grand Hotel to receive and welcome us. He was a short, plump little man, dressed in an expensive brown-silk kimono and a derby hat. About forty-five, his black, snappy eyes matched well with what I knew of his character—a man not to be trusted in any circumstances.

With him was a handsome—Japanesely speaking, of course—young chap in another rich brown kimono. There was something about this son of Nippon that at once subtly suggested the romantic, heroic and gallant qualities in his nature which later were to become so conspicuously apparent. Mr. Kitanoya introduced him as Mr. Nitti.

The polite young man then explained that Mr. Kitanoya desired us to know that we were to be his guests while at the hotel, that an automobile would be placed at our disposal to convey Paul to and from the dairy-house, about ten miles outside the city, that, on account of the long sea voyage, Paul was not expected to begin his labors until the following or even the second following day, and finally, if we would have the great kindness to excuse Mr. Kitanoya, he would go and attend to some important business. In a few well-chosen words I excused him.

He turned to us, bowing rapidly. His lips parted in a smile. He drew his breath in with a sharp, hissing sound, and then hissed out, "S-s-sank you."

It was my first experience with the double-action Japanese siss. It should be heard to be appreciated, but it is impossible to tell any story of the country and leave out mention of the natives' habit of sibilantly drawing their breath in and out between their teeth in moments of pleasure, perturbation, apology, congratulation, excitement, at the beginning, the middle and the end of every sentence. They all are addicted to this inward and outward hiss. Even little Tuti Kitanoya, the night she tricked the guards and escaped to—but more of that later.

Mr. Nitti showed traces of it, although he spoke English so well that,

"Mr. Nitti," I asked, "did you happen to attend school in America?"

"S-sank you," he replied, beaming and bowing. "I am graduate Boston School of Technology."

"Boston Tech!" Paul whirled round and faced him. "Are you an engineer?"

"Yes-s, pleas-se, for Mr. Kitanoya."

Before Paul could blurt out the question I knew was trembling on his lips: "Then what the devil did you bring me over here for?" I stepped on his foot.

"How interesting!" I smiled. "Do you know many nice people in Boston?"

"S-sank you, no, madam."

"I've heard that same criticism of its population before," I said.

At tiffin that day—tiffin is everything from *hors-d'œuvres* to indigestion, served in the middle of the day—Paul introduced a Mr. Graham, a nice young man in the American consulate whom he had met in the bar. Learning that I wished to look round the shops that afternoon, Mr. Graham begged to be permitted to accompany us.

"You no doubt have wondered why the natives are so smiling and gay," he said. "It's caused by the tourist trade."

WHAT transpired that afternoon is important because it taught me two facts, two Oriental characteristics, the understanding of which formed the weapon by which I defeated Mr. Kitanoya's well-laid plans.

I learned that the shopkeepers invariably asked two or three times the price for which they were willing to sell an article. The purchaser was then expected to bargain. Bargaining and drinking tea in geisha-houses are the national indoor sports. However, tourists seldom understand this, and pay the price first asked, which explains Mr. Graham's remark.

The other insight into the mind of the Far East was brought about by a question of mine concerning a cigar-lighter Mr. Graham had which actually worked. It was of silver, with his initials artistically engraved in it.

"A jeweler friend of mine in San Francisco invented it and made up a few for his friends. The secret lies in a short piece of platinum wire. Some time ago the wire in mine broke and I took it to a Japanese firm for replacement."

He took us across the narrow street and pointed to the window of a silversmith's ship.

"Look!"

There in the display-window were several lighters exactly like Mr. Graham's, *even to his engraved initials!*

"I've always heard they were marvelously clever imitators," I cried, carried away with admiration, "and now I know it!"

"How about patent-rights?" Paul asked Graham, but Graham only laughed and said something about "taking a chance on anything."

Early the next morning, the car Mr. Kitanoya had promised was waiting when Paul and I finished breakfast.

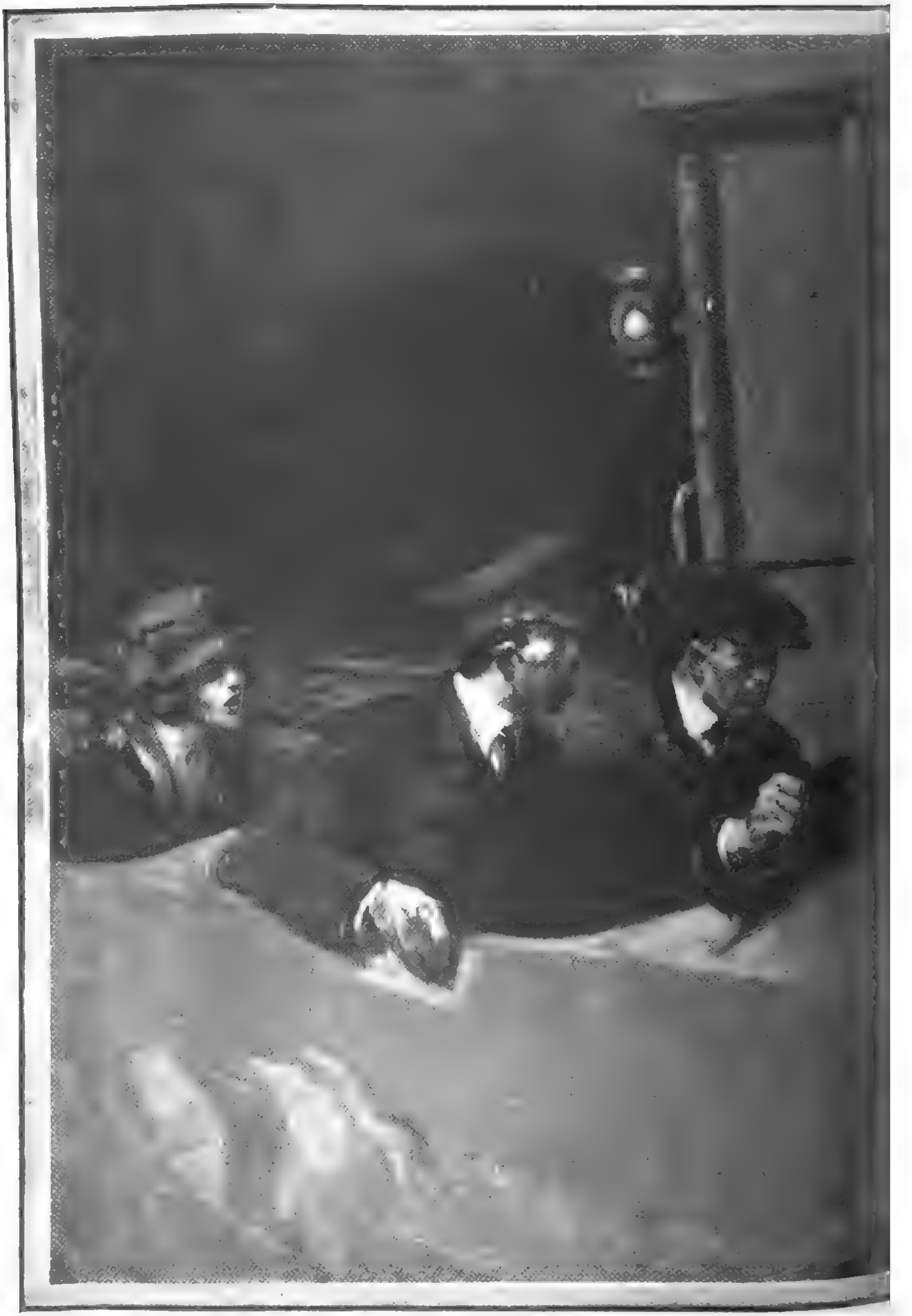
"I'm going to ride out with you, dear," I suggested. "As long as you will be at work all day, I might as well make use of the car and the chauffeur. I can call back for you about five this evening."

"That'll be nice," Paul said.

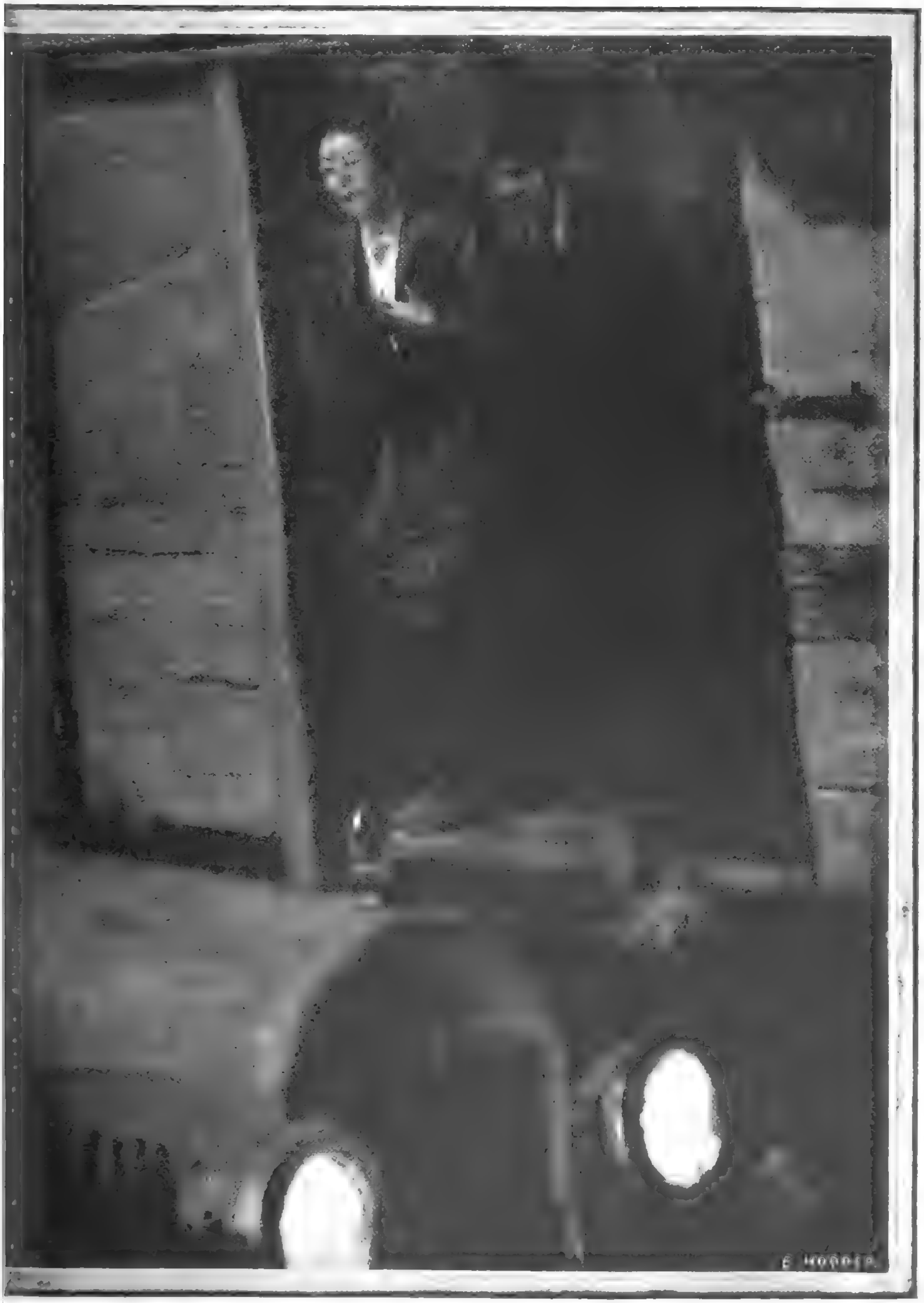
"What is your name?" I asked the driver. What he said was altogether too intricate for a chauffeur's name, I thought. I smiled in friendly fashion and said, "I'll call you 'James,' James."

Mr. Kitanoya was waiting for us at the dairy-house. This house was on the side of a long, gently rising hill, built close to some railroad tracks, which, on account of their bright, shiny rails, I assumed to be a main line. There were a couple of spurs, or side-tracks, branching off, one of which led to a long loading and unloading platform at the rear of the dairy.

About three hundred yards farther up



Skilfully Paul drew the auto abreast of them and edged it clo



perilously, recklessly close to the rocking, rumbling, freight-car.

the hill, and on the opposite side of the main-line tracks, was a foundry or steel-mill. I could see a blast-furnace, at any rate, and on some side-tracks or switches were open freight-cars loaded with coal and ore.

"I should think, Mr. Kitanoya," I remarked, "you'd be afraid the coal-dust and soot from that foundry would get into the milk."

He looked at me keenly as though I had meant something I hadn't said. Then he smiled and hissed,

"Excus-se, pleas-se, the wind so not often does blowing from foundry to this direction"—hiss—"otherwise I not build so close."

Right then I knew he was lying. The dairy-house was a ramshackle old wooden building that advertised its age, while the foundry was a modern, well-built structure. I glanced at Paul. He solemnly winked his eye. So I knew he needed no warning from me.

Driving back slowly through the houses clustered about the dairy-plant, more of a settlement than a village, I pointed to a large, imposing residence some distance ahead on my left. The house itself was set in the center of spacious grounds and gardens, with cunning little bridges built over artificial streams and ponds surrounded by dwarf trees, the whole enclosed entirely by a thick, rather high stone wall.

"Who lives there?" I asked James.

"Mr. Kitanoya and respectable wife and honorable daughter," James replied.

"What is his daughter's name? How old is she?"

"Her honorable name Tuti. She has age of eighteen—maybe twenty-two."

"Looks eighteen and is twenty-two, or vice versa?" I asked. But James didn't understand.

As we passed the big gate facing the road, I looked within and saw a long, winding pathway, flanked with shrubbery and bamboo poles supporting lanterns, leading to a wide, shaded veranda. Also I noticed two men in uniform standing at each side of the gate. Although there were no rifles in sight, they gave the impression of military guards. I mentioned this to James. He smiled.

"Mr. Kitanoya—he ver' rich. Japanese working mens—" He shrugged his shoulders.

"Capital-and-labor disputes are not unknown in my country, either," I told him.

What was my surprise and pleasure upon reaching the hotel to find the affable Mr. Nitti waiting for me. First, he asked if Paul had gone to work. Then he went on to explain that it was the custom of the country to give a *cumshaw*—a gift—to strangers within their hospitable shores, and that Mr. Kitanoya had requested him to get me to express a preference for something I should like to have.

"Isn't that sweet of him!" I exclaimed. "I know the very thing." I'd seen it the day before in a jeweler's window—an exquisite lacquer box trimmed with silver—frightfully expensive—with the dearest little drawers and shelves suitable for hairpins, lip-sticks and a manicure-set, and under the top, which could be raised and set at a convenient angle, a flawless plate-glass mirror. I showed it to Mr. Nitti.

"You like this?" he asked.

"I adore it!" I cried. "This box and the gorgeous silk kimono in the window across the street are the two nicest things I've seen."

"The pink kimono, pleas-se?"

"No; the solid-black corded-silk kimono with the brocaded cloth-of-gold *obi*," I explained.

"S-sank you." He inquired the initials I wished engraved on the lacquer box and made the salesman promise to deliver it to me that same afternoon. Excusing himself on the plea of work, he then left.

I HAPPENED to mention Mr. Kitanoya's generosity to Mr. Graham at tiffin, and how pleased Paul would be when he returned from the dairy-house that afternoon.

"Dairy-house?" Mr. Graham was puzzled.

"Yes; where Mr. Kitanoya installed the pasteurizing plant he purchased from my husband's firm."

Mr. Graham looked at me blankly.

"Kitanoya is in the steel business," he said, "one of the biggest steel men in Japan. I can't understand—er, would you mind asking your husband to look me up when he comes in?"

I forgot all about it until Paul and I were dressing for dinner that night.

"I know why Kitanoya sent for me," my husband said, trying to get the studs into his dress-shirt. "He's getting rid of Nitti.

He offered me a year's contract at twice my salary as chief engineer of all his plants."

"His steel plants?" I asked.

"Steel plants!" Paul's great brown eyes widened in intense astonishment. So I told him what Mr. Graham had said.

"Don't mention that at dinner to-night, Birdie. I forgot to tell you Mr. Kitanoya and wife and daughter are entertaining us here at the hotel."

"What's the matter with their home?" I asked.

"He told me we wouldn't care for Japanese food."

"Have you located the trouble with his pasteurizing plant yet?" I inquired a moment later.

"I haven't had a chance to examine it. Kitanoya said there would be plenty of time to go into that after we had decided on the terms of the contract he wants me to sign."

Just then there came a knock on the door. It was a messenger with the lacquer-and-silver box. Showing it to Paul, I pulled out one of the little drawers. In it was a bit of folded paper. I opened it and read:

> If honorable lady invite me to room to-night alone, I tell something very much interesting regard my aunt and uncle. Tuti Kitanoya.

"Aunt and uncle!" I gasped. "James told me Tuti was his daughter."

"So did Kitanoya," Paul said.

I WAS glad my husband was safely married when I saw Tuti that evening. She was pretty and attractive and cute beyond description. She wore a black-silk kimono over four others, which shaded from a dark brown until the one next her was almost a tan. Her black hair was slicked and "coiffed" till not a loose strand showed, and her skin was so clear and smooth it was a positive recommendation for a Japanese diet. She was exactly my height, and apparently we weighed the same, although her figure perhaps was not so rounded or symmetrical as mine. I liked her immediately.

Mrs. Kitanoya was a little woman with a lot of jewelry and a wonderful faculty for smiling at the wrong remarks.

The first opportunity I had, I thanked Mr. Kitanoya for the lacquer-and-silver box. He seemed surprised for a moment. Then he said:

"Mr. Nitti ver' honorable and mos' polite gentleman. I much sorry when to-day our contract finishing, and he inform he must going to Vladivostok."

Tuti's fork slid from her fingers and clattered on the floor. Kitanoya glanced sharply at her.

"Excus-se, pleas-se," Tuti softly apologized, apprehensively. Mrs. Kitanoya forced a smile.

"I suppose," I said easily, striving to relieve the embarrassment of the moment, "I suppose Miss Kitanoya is much more accustomed to eating with chop-sticks."

After dinner I contrived tactfully to excuse Tuti and myself for a few moments and hurried her to my room.

"What was it you wanted?" I asked.

"Honorable madam, pleas-se"—she giggled—"I ask great favor." She pointed to my new wardrobe-trunk. "I ver' much pleased to see your pretty clothes."

I had a trousseau I wasn't ashamed to show any one; so, getting the key from my bag, I opened the trunk. Naturally, she went into raptures.

"I think it ver' nice to be marry," she said, leaning on the trunk. There was a wistful expression in her dark eyes and a little catch in her voice that plainer than words told me she was in the throes of an unhappy love-affair.

"What is the obstacle, dearie?" I said. "Doesn't your father——"

"Excus-se, pleas-se," she interrupted. "My honorable father and mother die when I a baby. My father ver' rich Japanese gentleman. No child exception I. My honorable uncle, Mr. Kitanoya, take me to his home and put my money inside his bank. Then he commencement calling me daughter." She smiled wanly. "It is ver' humorous. Because now he plan I marry to his son."

"His son!"

"Yes, madam. He now at university."

"Trying to keep your money in the family," I whispered. "And there's another man in the case?" She blushed and hid her face behind her fan. "Why don't you run away and marry him?"

"You do like that in America?"

"Absolutely," I told her.

"Much different in Japan." Tuti sighed. "Young ladies must obey honorable parents. Also, young Japanese gentleman expect bride to bring money when she marry." She drooped pathetically. "My honorable uncle pays much money to see I not run away."

I realized the guards at Kitanoya's were serving a double purpose.

"Just the same, dearie, if there's anything I can do to help you, don't hesitate to call on me."

Tuti unexpectedly giggled.

"Sank you. You already much help."

Not for forty-eight hours did I grasp the full significance of that remark.

Tuti started for the door, then swiftly turned.

"Pleas-se, I forget what I coming to tell. My honorable uncle not in dairy business. He not know anything regard dairy—nothing. He—" She checked herself, one ear cocked toward the door, and pantomimed for me to open it. I did. In walked Mrs. Kitanoya, smiling vacantly. As quickly as I could arrange to do so, we rejoined the men in the reception-lobby.

"Paul," I said in the seclusion of our suite late that night, after I'd finished telling him about Tuti, "as long as Kitanoya doesn't know anything about the dairy-machinery business, you ought to be able to get *very* favorable terms in the contract he's offering you."

"If I sign it," Paul grunted, "I'd like to know if there would be any chance to horn into Nitti's old job. You—you like Japan, don't you, Birdie?"

"Yes. It's so—so intriguing," I said, for want of a better word.

THE next morning, instead of driving back to Yokohama after leaving Paul at the dairy-house, I had James take me on up the hill and across the tracks to the foundry. All morning I had been revolving in my head four known facts, turning them over and over, rearranging their order, trying to make them divulge the secret which my woman's intuition told me they concealed. These were the facts: (1) Kitanoya had bought a dairy machine, although not in the dairy business; (2) The Japanese are wonderfully skilful imitators; (3) Kitanoya was a steel manufacturer; (4) Kitanoya was a crook.

I found a smooth-faced young man busily writing in the office of the foundry.

"Pardon me, is Mr. Kitanoya on the premises?" I asked.

"No, madam. I sink he not come today."

"This is his office, isn't it?"

"Yes, madam."

"Sank you," I replied without thinking. I'd discovered what I had suspected—that Kitanoya owned the foundry. I glanced round the yard. The slightly opened door of a large storehouse, or freight-room, invited me. No loiterers were in sight. Quickly I slipped inside.

A quantity of machinery and machine parts met my view. Keeping my eyes darting hither and thither, I descried the thing that only semiconsciously I had been seeking. There, in the gloom of the freight-house, the words fairly leaping at me from a name-plate bolted to a piece of machinery, I read:

HOLSTEIN & CO.
DAIRY MACHINERY
Jersey City, U. S. A.

I started searching for another piece of machinery similiar in size and shape. I found one—and another—and still another—twelve in all—all with bright new Holstein Company name-plates shining into my incredulous eyes. Hastily I estimated Paul's commission on twelve machines, the commission Kitanoya had robbed him of. Boiling with indignation, I crept out of the warehouse and back to the automobile.

"To the dairy-house, James," I said determinedly.

I found Paul sitting on the lowest step at the end of the loading platform, gazing absent-mindedly at the trucks of a freight-car on the track in front of him.

"That sure gives me something to think about," Paul remarked in his repressed manner when I had concluded telling him of Kitanoya's duplicity. "You see, I've located the trouble in this pasteurizing plant inside. I know why it has been turning out blue milk."

"Blue milk?"

"Yes, Birdie. Inside the tank where the milk is heated there is a steam-coil; that is, the pipes carrying the steam which heat the milk are coiled inside the tank. In setting up his coil—either because they lost it or perhaps, through an oversight, the factory didn't ship enough of them—a return-bend connecting the steam-coil to the outlet pipe was not fitted in. Consequently, the steam has been escaping into the milk in the tank, causing what we call 'blue milk.' "

"Have you told Mr. Kitanoya yet?"

"No. And I don't believe he or any of the crew inside really know what is ruining the milk." Paul looked speculatively toward the foundry. "Kitanoya evidently took the machine we sold him to pieces, made patterns and measurements, and began manufacturing pasteurizing plants exactly like ours—even to the name-plate. But when he set up our plant again, it didn't work properly. He realized then that the other twelve machines he'd made—or was making—all exactly like the original, also were no good and would turn out blue milk.

"With all that money and material tied up, he couldn't afford to waste time fooling round or experimenting. So he sent for me." A frown of distress creased my husband's smooth brow as he continued. "According to the guaranty we gave Kitanoya, and also on account of my reputation as an engineer, I've got to put the plant we sold him in A No. 1 operating condition."

"It seems a shame; doesn't it, dear?"

"It's worse than that, Birdie, because if I put in an order for a return-bend, or tell Kitanoya's foreman to get one, they'll watch carefully to see what I do with it. Then they'll know how to remedy the other twelve machines." Paul sighed.

"Honey," I comforted him, "there must be *some* honest way out of this. What—what is a return-bend, anyway?"

"It's a U-shaped piece of pipe used to connect two pipe-lines running parallel to each other," Paul explained abstractedly.

"Like—like that thing under the freight-car there?" I asked.

Paul's eyes followed my finger. He swore softly, jumped up, hesitated, and then, his eyes blinking rapidly, he took a folding rule and what he calls "calipers" from his pocket and stooped in under the car. After measuring and calipering the piece of pipe I'd pointed to, he crawled out, grinning his appealing boyish grin.

"What is it?" I asked.

"An air-brake connection," Paul replied, "a return-bend exactly like I need for the steam-tank." A look of serene bliss spread over his features.

"What are you going to do, dearest?"

"I'm going to get a pipe-wrench and take off that connection, Birdie. If I can get it without any one seeing me, hide it under my shirt, set the Jap crew working on another part of the system while I fit it in, I can then make a few minor adjustments, which should be made, anyway, and tell Kitanoya that climatic conditions being different over here, all the plant needed was adjusting."

I stood sentry when he climbed back under the car with a pipe-wrench a few minutes later. Really it was quite thrilling, standing there on the lookout, ten thousand miles away from home, struggling alone, back to back with my husband against a deck of stacked cards, as it were. I was certain no one had seen us when Paul emerged from beneath the car, whistling gaily, the piece of pipe concealed under his coat.

I HAD just finished an invigorating bath when Paul came in that evening.

"What success, dear?" I asked.

"O. K. Not a soul knows what I did."

Elated, I unlocked my trunk to get a coral crêpe-de-Chine combination I'd never had on. One glance—and I knew the trunk's contents had been tampered with.

Quickly we investigated. The following articles were missing:

One new automobile veil.

One pair brown Oxfords—worn once.

One new blue tailored suit.

One new blue toque trimmed with red berries.

One pair tan kid gloves.

"Somebody likes your style, Birdie," Paul remarked dryly.

"But how could any one get into the trunk? I know I locked it before leaving this morning. You haven't lost your key to it, have you, Paul?"

"No." He showed me the extra key on his chain.

"You and I have the only two keys in Japan."

"Don't bet on that, Birdie." Paul had been examining the Yale lock on the trunk. "This doesn't look as though it had been picked. Have you let any one handle your key? Any of the servants? It's easy enough to make a wax impression."

"No," I said; "no one could possibly—" Then I remembered opening the trunk for Tuti and leaving the key in the lock while she hung over it, admiring my trousseau. "It's ridiculous to suspect Tuti of——"

"What's ridiculous about it?" Paul interrupted in his tranquil manner.

"A girl with the money she has can *buy* all the clothes she needs," I retorted.

"European clothes?"

"Certainly. There are plenty of tailors here."

"But suppose she didn't want any one, not even her tailor, to know she had a European outfit. Doesn't it strike you as odd that, although Mr. Nitti bought the lacquer-and-silver box and had it delivered within a few hours, yet in one of the drawers you found a note from Miss Tuti?"

"Yes; but——"

"As a result of that note you heard her say that it wasn't Kitanoya's son but some one else she'd like to marry, and that her uncle kept her under guard to prevent her running away."

"Paul," I demanded suspiciously, "do you know something that I don't?"

My husband laughed.

"When I went to have our return-tickets validated this afternoon, I saw Nitti at the steamship office. He was buying two tickets to Vladivostok. He took great pains to tell me that he was interested in a foundry there."

Tuti and Nitti! I thought it over. As soon as she saw me, she must have realized she could wear my clothes. In fact, Nitti, seeing me first, might have told her that my trousseau offered an opportunity for her to escape the vigilance of her uncle.

"I wouldn't be a bit surprised to find that Kitanoya had discharged Nitti on account of his attentions to Tuti," I told Paul.

"Perhaps," Paul answered, absently adding a few items to his expense-account while waiting for me to finish dressing. "Nitti let slip to-day that nearly all the dairy business here is under government supervision and control. Also that Kitanoya has acted several times as special agent for the imperial government."

"A government job!" I whispered, remembering the contract Kitanoya wished Paul to sign. "I wonder if that means as much here as it does in the U. S. A."

"I'll take no government job in this man's land," Paul bluntly stated. "Knowing the penalties and punishments favored by the mikado, do you think I want to be held responsible when, in three or four months all those pasteurizing plants start breaking down at the same time?"

IT WAS on the following morning, while waiting for James to return from the dairy-house, that I evolved the scheme which is still a matter of more or less friendly argument between my husband and myself. Paul's action in repairing the original machine surreptitiously, in order to keep Kitanoya's twelve stolen machines useless, was justifiable revenge. But, as Shakespeare says, "What availeth vengeance without profit?" And while I believe that deceit between man and wife never leads to anything better than a lawyer's office, still deceit is one thing and a lovingly planned surprise is totally different.

So, getting into the car, I went to Mr. Kitanoya's home, trusting to find him or, if not, at least information as to where he might be found. A fifty-cent piece persuaded one of the guards at the gate to take my card to the house. A few moments later I was seated opposite Mr. Kitanoya on the wide veranda of the house.

"What I am about to say is done without the knowledge, consent or approval of my husband," I began. "You thoroughly understand that?"

"Yes-s," he sissed.

"The idea is, of course, that you first did my husband a grave injustice in the matter of the letters of credit."

"Yes-s." He nodded politely.

"Understanding his feelings in the matter, you can appreciate why he only fixed up the machine you bought and not the ones you copied from it."

"Yes-s." He showed not the slightest agitation at learning I knew the existence of the copied machines.

"Except you take down the original machine and count the parts, you'll never know what he did to put it in running-order," I said, "unless I tell you."

That disturbed his inscrutable calm. He inhaled sharply.

"Ah! A missing part!"

"But one which can easily be secured," I told him.

"Small part?"

"Yes; *quite* small. But absolutely indispensable."

He regarded me silently, hypnotically for a moment.

"How much money—your husband wish?" he asked.

"I told you, Mr. Kitanoya, on the word of a lady, that my husband knows nothing of what I am doing or saying."

"Excus-se, pleas-se. How much money *you* want?"

"Well," I said, happy to have reached the point of my visit so quickly, "how much is it worth to you?"

"Pleas-se, how long it takes—the missing parts?"

"You mean how soon can I get them for you?" He nodded. "Why, if vitally necessary, I could get them to you to-night."

"To-night!" He could not hide the thrill my words gave him. "Ten o'clock, pleas-se?"

"Yes."

"At foundry?"

"Yes."

"Also you tell where missing part belong?"

"Yes."

"Pleas-se, I sink." He lost himself in thought.

Tuti, a maid and a sturdy male attendant following a few paces behind her, came round the corner of the house. She looked straight at me. Then, with the most formal of nods, she coolly turned her back and retraced her footsteps.

Kitanoya's voice roused me from my bewildered search for some cause for Tuti's strange conduct.

"Pleas-se, how I making sure you bring proper part?"

I'd anticipated that question.

"I don't wish a penny until I give you the parts, the directions for using them and the reason for your getting the blue milk," I said. "Naturally, after explaining the matter, I expect to be paid for my kindness and courtesy before delivering the parts," I added, smiling frankly.

"Madam, you bring parts to-night—foundry—ten o'clock—I gladly giving you two thousand dollar. More, I send man to help you."

Not for nothing had I familiarized myself with the manners and customs of that quaint country.

"Thank you, Mr. Kitanoya; but I wouldn't need any of your employees to assist me. even were I willing to do it for two thousand dollars," I said.

"You sink you like more?" he asked, an expression of innocent surprise suffusing his bland countenance.

"The lowest I had considered was five thousand," I said, uncrossing my ankles as though preparing to rise.

"I ver' sorry. Excus-se, pleas-se. I not know. I sink—er—I sink three thousand much better, eh?"

"For you," I said. "But, considering that I am deceiving my husband and also, so to speak, compounding a felony, forty-six hundred is about the lowest my conscience would permit me to accept."

His face fell.

"Honorable lady forget I am a poor man. I sink thirty-five hundred all I can borrow."

"Well," I said graciously, "I don't want to embarrass you. I'd rather sacrifice my own interests than lose a friend. So I'll take four thousand three hundred, in cash, of course—American bills."

"Honorable lady ver' severe. Too late to go to banks now. I not sink possible to get 'Merican money by to-night—more than four thousand."

"I never thought of that, Mr. Kitanoya. I'm awfully sorry. But perhaps I can help you. I saw a tourist to-day change a hundred-dollar bill at the hotel. You go get that bill and add it to the four thousand you're going to borrow, and I'll meet you at the foundry at ten to-night."

That time I really rose from my chair. So did Kitanoya, bowing and smiling.

"I sink that ver' nice, honorable lady. S-sank you."

"Don't mention it," I rejoined cordially, tripping lightly down the curving path to the car standing in the road.

WHEN Paul returned from the dairy-house that evening, his face was so serious that it called for the utmost exertion of my will to refrain from telling him the good news.

"Sweetheart," he said, "I've just finished a long talk with Kitanoya. Something has happened to change his attitude toward me. Not once did he mention contract to me."

"Well, dear, you didn't intend to sign it, anyway, did you?"

"No; but he didn't know that. Something has happened. If you don't mind, Birdie, I'll go back to the plant to-night after dinner. By working late I can finish up the work I came here to do. I can also give the Jap foreman—shrewd little chap he is, a good mechanic—a lot of pointers and warnings about operating the plant. That will clean the slate as far as our guarantee is concerned. Then I'll tell Kitanoya I'm going home. That ought to bring matters to a head."

WITH joy I heard Paul's decision to work that night. I'd been wondering what to do with him that evening, how to get away from him long enough to remove twelve return-bends from the air-brake connections on the freight-cars standing on the foundry side-tracks.

But directly after dinner an incident occurred which rather complicated the situation. We found a boy standing outside the door of our suite with a bundle addressed to me. Mystified, I opened it.

Lo and behold! It was the gorgeous black corded-silk kimono with its brocaded cloth-of-gold *obi*. Draped over my trunk it fairly exhaled richness and extravagance.

"What a dent that'll put in my expense-account," Paul murmured.

"But, sweetness," I protested, "*I* didn't buy this."

"What?" Paul's keen eye spied the corner of a note pinned under the roll of the collar.

HONORABLE MADAM: Please to accept this token of grateful feeling. Wear it when you come to my home eight-thirty o'clock this night.
TUTI KITANOYA.

"What's she so grateful feeling about?" Paul asked.

"I can't imagine—unless maybe she appreciates the language I spared her when she cut me cold this afternoon." Too late I realized my careless remark threatened to spoil the loving surprise I had planned for my husband.

"Oh!" Paul looked inquisitively at me. "You saw her this afternoon. Is that when you made the appointment for this evening?"

"I didn't make any appointment at all. This is the first I knew I was supposed to go to her home to-night. And, furthermore, this is the first I knew she was aware of my liking for this kimono. Nitti is the only human I ever mentioned it to."

"He was the only one who knew about the lacquer box, too, wasn't he?"

"Yes."

"Of course you won't go out there to-night, Birdie."

"Why, Paul! After receiving this magnificent gift, the least I can do is to take the hint in Tuti's note and——"

"How do you know Tuti wrote this note?"

"Because it's the same angular handwriting as the first one—the note that came in the drawer of the box."

"What makes you think she wrote that one? For all you know, Nitti might have written both of the notes."

"Suppose he did," I retorted. "There is nothing of an amorous nature between Mr. Nitti and myself. Therefore he's not giving me expensive presents to gain favor for himself. On the other hand, no one gives gifts of such value to an almost total stranger—as I am to Tuti and Nitti—unless he or she expects some return. A blind man could see when I thanked Kitanoya for the lacquer box that he knew nothing about it."

"Right!" Paul agreed. "And the day after you got it, some one took a lot of clothes out of your trunk. Maybe, after sending this kimono, they'll come back to-morrow for the trunk."

"No," I said. "The return Tuti, or Nitti, or both of them expect from this kimono gift is contained right here in the note—'my home eight-thirty o'clock this night.' Although I don't pretend to know why I'm wanted there, my woman's intuition tells me that I am needed, and that, while performing this service, no harm will come to me. So unless you positively forbid me to go, which I know you wouldn't be so cruel as to do, I'll go, Paul."

"If that's the way you feel about it—" Without finishing, Paul took a revolver from his trunk. "Come on, Birdie; I've got to go to work. Throw the kimono over your arm and put it on in the car. I notice lots of the women here use them in place of wraps."

"What are you intending to do with the revolver, Paul?" I asked apprehensively.

"I'm going to give it to James and tell him that, if anything happens to you, he'd better use it on himself before I do."

Little did I dream at that moment to what use that revolver would be put before the night was over.

At any rate, after we had deposited Paul at the dairy-house, James drove back down the hill and stopped the car immediately in front of the gate, where he could get an unobstructed view of the lantern-lit path to the house. When I told the guards I wished to see Miss Kitanoya, they made no move to prevent my entering. At the door I repeated my request and was ushered into a large room. The maid withdrew.

Going to the window, I raised the shade and waved my handkerchief reassuringly to James.

BUT, instead of Tuti, Kitanoya himself entered the room, greatly excited and wrought up. He was muttering a stream of sputtering Japanese which rose in volume and tone when he saw me. From my expression, he must have comprehended that I could not understand a syllable of it, for he checked himself. Then for fully a minute, his hands behind him, he walked up and down the length of the room. Several times he stopped as if to speak. Then, changing his mind, or not finding the words, he resumed his restless pacing. At length, with a palpable effort at self-control, he said:

"Excus-se. I not sink you know what you do. My daughter—she impossible to see you. She never seeing any persons after night. She—she not well. You will excus-se, pleas-se. It is——"

He stopped short, gazing spellbound through the window. I had neglected to draw the shade after waving to James. I looked. Words fail to describe my sensations when I saw my blue tailored suit and toque and auto veil walking along under the lanterns toward the gate!

Kitanoya swore a frightful oath and darted for the door—I after him. We reached the veranda at the same moment. Again Kitanoya shouted—no words—just a yell of rage. One of the guards at the gate ran toward us. As he passed the blue suit and auto veil, Tuti—for I knew it must be she—with a lightning kick tripped him. Taken completely by surprise, the guard pitched forward heavily. His head struck a stone bordering the path. He lay inert, temporarily stunned.

At the same instant, a man dressed in European clothes sprang out of the black shadow of the wall and silently felled the other guard. He called to Tuti. I recognized his voice. Nitti!

Heeding her sweetheart's warning cry, Tuti turned her head and saw Kitanoya and me standing on the veranda, dazed by the swift movement of events. A black kimono she was carrying over her arm dropped to the ground. Raising her skirts, she dashed toward Nitti.

That broke the spell. With another yell, Kitanoya jumped down the steps in mad pursuit. I followed.

Tuti was fairly flying. Nitti, his hand outstretched toward her, remained at the gate, urging her on. Unmindful of his footing, Kitanoya stumbled over the black kimono Tuti had discarded. He staggered, reeled, almost fell, and then, with a twisting effort, regained his balance.

The next second, running hand in hand through the unguarded gate, Tuti and Nitti disappeared round the corner of the wall. But Kitanoya hung grimly to the chase.

As a photographer's flash-light picks out of the dark every detail of a scene, so the sight of that crumpled black kimono in the path instantaneously illumined the lovers' bold plan. As I ran after Kitanoya, fully I saw the reason for the theft of my clothes, the invitation to call that night, the gift of the black-silk kimono.

Upon my arrival, my dress covered, its color and design concealed by the black-silk kimono which I was wearing as a wrap, I was to be detained inside the house for a few moments. Then Tuti, in European clothes, her features indistinguishable under the veil and the dim light of the lanterns, was to venture forth to join Nitti, waiting for her across the road. With a black-silk kimono over her arm, she hoped to fool the guards into thinking it was I, my visit over, returning to my car.

And I realized that only my negligence in not closing the blind after waving to James—an accident none could foresee—was responsible for Kitanoya discovering the plot. Burning with self-condemnation, I caught up to Kitanoya. As we raced through the gate, I inserted my foot between his pudgy knees. Down we went, rolling in the dust of the road, our legs interlaced.

Dizzily we disengaged our members and stood up. Kitanoya favored me with a dirty look and then ran to the guard at the gate, now recovered from Nitti's blow. Other servants, roused by the shouts, came churning out of the house, and as Kitanoya spat out his crackling orders, they scattered in different directions. A deep-toned bell began striking regularly, its heavy tones rolling up and down the hillside.

Jabbering incessantly, Kitanoya hurried to the house—with me at his heels. I got up on the veranda and saw him take a telephone from a table before the door was slammed in my face. Almost immediately it was opened by a maid.

"Mr. Kitanoya, he say foundry—ten o'clock."

After rousing the whole countryside to join in the search, after closing every avenue of escape to poor unfortunate Tuti, Kitanoya could well afford to attend to business!

"To the foundry," I instructed James, when I reached the car. As I entered the auto, I noticed two strange traveling bags—European—on the floor of the tonneau. They had not been there when I had arrived at Kitanoya's. Of that I was certain.

"Where did they come from?" I asked James. "Who put them there?"

"Me no know," James replied, smiling.

"The Lord loveth a cheerful liar," I smiled back at him.

"Yes," he agreed.

A moment's concentration revealed the answer.

"How much did Nitti pay you to drive them away in my car to-night?" For I saw that, if Tuti had been successful in passing the guards, she would have further strengthened their belief that she was I by getting into my car and driving off. Moreover, such a stratagem would have carried them quickly far beyond the range of Kitanoya's authority. In the feverish state of mind she was in, I could easily forgive her for overlooking the inconvenience the loss of the car would cause Paul and me.

"Honorable missus," James hissed in reply to my query, "pleas-se, I like know if you feet slipping, or maybe—pleas-se—you did climb Mr. Kitanoya to make him falling purposeful?"

"If you had heard the squeal he gave when I jabbed my hatpin in his tummy, you wouldn't ask," I replied. "I did it to help Tuti get away."

"S-sank you. It too sad, I sink. No can get escape now." He sissed in regretful discouragement.

"James," I said, "you know this country and I don't. But, somehow, some way, through some artifice, my woman's intuition tells me that Love's labor will not be lost to-night."

We drove on in silence.

A hundred yards from the foundry I stopped the car and removed from under the rear seat, where I'd put them that afternoon, a gunny-sack and a pipe-wrench.

"Listen, James; you like to make a hundred dollars and keep your mouth closed?"

He didn't even open it to accept—just bobbed his head violently and reached for the roll of bills I took from my bag.

"Follow me," I said.

WE EXTINGUISHED the headlights of the car. Keeping out of the light shining from the building, we hurried round to the rear, to the loading platform, in front of which I had seen a string of freight-cars. Up to this moment I had been so excited and eager that only dimly conscious had I been of the unusual noise and bustle and sounds of voices which had reached me.

But, turning the corner of the building, the scene that opened before my eyes will never be forgotten. Under a number of yellow electric bulbs, their small cranes creaking and squeaking, a gang of men was loading machinery on a train. I recognized several familiar shapes. *They were loading the stolen machinery!*

I peered into the darkness of the yard. No other cars were in sight except the train standing locomotiveless at the loading platform. Quickly I counted those cars. Thank heaven—twelve!

Admonishing James to caution, I crept in under the end car and showed him how to remove the return-bend. When that was safely in the gunny-sack, we crawled out and attacked the next car. Never till my dying day shall I cease to thrill at the memory of the emotions which coursed through my tingling veins that black night while James earned his hundred and I my forty-one hundred, unscrewing crooked pieces of pipe from the bottom of the cars on which, all unsuspecting of our presence, Kitanoya's workmen were loading the stolen machines!

And just as we were about to crawl from beneath the last car, perspiring from every pore, our work completed, out of the deep shadows flitted two figures. Noiselessly, fleetly they approached the car under which James and I were crouched. Again I recognised my blue suit and auto veil—and Nitti! Threatening James into silence with the pipe-wrench, I held my breath.

Nitti's breath was coming fast as he warily squinted round the end of the car toward the workmen at the other end of the train. Satisfied that they were too busily engaged to have seen him, he assisted Tuti to climb up on the freight-car. Another glance in all directions and he followed her. Immediately I grasped the significance of the maneuver. Despairing of running the gantlet of Kitanoya's guards on foot, Nitti and Tuti had decided to attempt to ride out of harm's way on the freight train, snuggled together on their rough journey to happiness behind the sheltering protection of the surrounding pasteurizing plants!

I looked at the radium hands of my wristwatch. Horrified, I saw they pointed to ten-thirty. I was half an hour late for my appointment with Kitanoya.

MUFFLING the clank of return-bends as best we could, James and I extricated ourselves from the shadows of the freight-car. And at that instant, with a nerve-shattering crash, an engine backed into the other end of the train and was hooked on. Brushing the dirt off my clothes and blindly jabbing with my powder-puff, I hurried James to the office. Through the crack of the door I heard Mr. Kitanoya say,

"I not understand reason you feeling such."

To my astonishment, he was answered by my husband's voice, in the tone I'd heard him use one evening in a poker game aboard the steamer.

"I'll tell you, Mr. Kitanoya. I'd like very much to help you out, but I don't see how I can. As far as I'm officially concerned, that machinery out there doesn't exist. My company has never notified me that it did exist. So how can I repair it—officially? Worse than that, as I'm not under contract either to you or to the government, I have no legal right—in fact, I'd lay myself liable to a criminal charge if I were to alter, change or even tinker with one bit of it." Paul cleared his throat. "If you don't know what's wrong with them, why are you shipping them?"

Mr. Kitanoya cleared his throat.

"I will candidly speaking. Honorable party—name not necessary—make appointment ten o'clock to-night for bring missing parts. I to pay muchly for information and same. I trust honorable party. But honorable party deception me. Damn honorable party!"

Fortunately for the Jap, Paul had not the slightest conception whom Kitanoya was cursing.

"Even so," my husband answered suavely, "why the hurry? Why ship to-night?"

"I—I sink I like ship to-night."

"You're not coming clean with me, Mr. Kitanoya," Paul said in an aggrieved tone. "How can you expect me to help you unless I know the circumstances? Is there a bonus clause in your contract for an early delivery? Or, perhaps—" Paul interrupted himself excitedly. "By Gad, I've got it! A *forfeit!* You're liable to a forfeit—perhaps cancelation—unless the machines are f. o. b. by a certain date, and—*and your time-limit expires to-night!* Is that it?"

There was dead silence in the office for a moment. Then the Jap said amiably,

"I sink I prefer to pay honorable gentleman for information instead to pay money to government."

"I'll bet you would!" Paul answered. "But even if you could make it worth my while"—he paused slightly—"my duty to my firm——"

I waited to hear no more. I owed no duty to his firm. My heart thumping pleasantly in anticipation of Paul's delight at the surprise in store for him, I opened the door and shoved James and the gunny-sack through it.

"Sorry to be so late, Mr. Kitanoya; but——"

James dropped the gunny-sack with a dull, metallic thud.

"Have got?" Kitanoya shouted.

I motioned James to the door.

"Have *you* got?" I asked Kitanoya.

Instead of replying, he took some money from his desk and faced Paul.

"Pleas-se, the salary I owing. I pay hotel bill. You not to worry. S-sank you ver' much. You sign receipt? Pleas-se."

Then he took another roll from the drawer and gave it to me. I counted it.

"Excus-se pleas-se, honorable lady, missing part—what you call? Where belong?"

Briefly I told him. He looked at Paul. My husband, an odd expression in his big brown eyes, nodded confirmation.

Kitanoya clapped his hands decisively. A servant popped in through the door. Kitanoya pointed to the sack and gave a short order. The servant picked up the return-bends and ran out. Kitanoya consulted his watch. Then, he, too, ran out through the door. We heard him shouting an order. A moment later, an explosive snort of the locomotive and a crashing of chains and steel told me the train was under way. Gleefully I turned to Paul—to find him glaring, positively scowling at me.

"Where did you get those return-bends?" he growled.

"From under the freight-cars, of course."

Paul went white. "Not *those* cars!" He pointed to the freight gaining momentum as it rolled down the hill.

"Yes."

"Boy!" Paul leaped out of his chair, shouting to the clerk writing at a desk in the corner. "Get the nearest railroad office on the 'phone—quick! Tell the agent to wire all train-dispatchers on this division to clear all the tracks. A twelve-car freight loaded with machinery is running wild!"

"Running wild?" I echoed, as the clerk put his mouth to the receiver.

"When you took off those return-bends you ruined every air-brake on that train," Paul whispered. "The only way to stop that freight now is to wreck it!"

"Wreck it! Oh, my heavens, Paul! *Tuti is on it!*" I shrieked.

"What?"

"Tuti and Nitti—they're eloping!"

Paul stared at me unseeing for a second. Then he grabbed my wrist and jerked me toward the door.

"Where's the machine—the auto?" he croaked dryly.

James saw us tearing frantically toward him and had the lights on and the motor running when we tumbled into the car.

"The Tokyo road!" Paul shouted. "And step on her, boy; step on her!"

OVER the roar of the exhaust as James swung the car into the road and opened the muffler cut-out, Paul cried,

"Help me take the top down!"

Swaying, bouncing, jolting against each other, skittering round curves on two wheels, thrown off our balance and nearly out of the car at every sharp turn of the uneven country road, we finally managed to get the top folded back.

"Why?" I yelled, as the car settled down on the main highway to Tokyo. The speed of the machine created a wind that blew my question back into my mouth and carried away sections of Paul's answer.

"Long stretch of road—parallels tracks—noticed it—other day— If—can catch up—train—Nitti and Tuti—jump from train—into auto."

"No!" I cried involuntarily, horrified at the very thought. "Is there no other way? There must be!"

Paul shook his head and climbed over into the front seat. The car careened dizzily as he took the wheel from James.

"Keep praying—we catch train before—jumps tracks—into a ditch!" Paul shouted.

On my knees in the tonneau, holding grimly to the robe-rail, I watched the figures on the speedometer jerk and quiver.

Forty-eight! Forty-nine! Fifty! The headlights shot off into the pitchy blackness of the roadside as we whizzed round a turn. By a miracle we missed a coolie jogging between the shafts of a rickshaw.

Fifty-one! Fifty-two! Fifty-three! Paul put his finger on the button of the motor-horn and kept it there as the lanterns of a small village dimly penetrated the darkness ahead of us. A few moments later the curses of the natives mingled sulphurously with the smoke of our exhaust.

Fifty-six! Fifty-seven! Fifty-eight! Fifty-nine! Suddenly, on the ground close to our left, I caught the glinting reflection of the headlights on steel. Looking closer, I saw there were two shining streaks a few feet apart—the railroad tracks! I pointed them out to Paul. He shook his head. I understood it to mean we had not yet reached the strip of road he had in mind. Anxiously peering ahead and behind us, I could see no sign of the runaway freight. I looked toward the ground again. The tracks were gone!

Sixty! Sixty-one! Sixty-two! The wind whistling past my ears drowned out every sound except the raucous undertone of our throbbing, straining engine.

Sixty-four! Sixty-five! Rounding a wide turn, again I saw the tracks. Ahead, the distance impossible to judge in the murk, was the dull glow such as comes from the stack of a locomotive on a black night. And closer—bobbing and blinking—the red rear-end lights of a train!

Rapidly we overhauled it; gradually we pulled abreast of the last car. As Paul juggled our pace to accommodate the speed of the train, I wondered how on earth we were to attract Tuti's attention. How make her understand her desperate predicament and how encourage her to attempt the leap into our car?

I SHOULD have known that my husband would be equal to the emergency. He said something to James. Quickly the little Jap took Paul's revolver from his pocket and gave it to him.

Paul raised it high above his head. One—two—three! In rapid succession the sharp barks of the gun pierced the deafening din.

On a line with the rear end of the train as we were, our headlights raked the length of the car whose passengers we were trying to rouse. A racking moment—then again three shots punctured the roar of the train and the bellow of our motor.

Nitti's pallid features appeared in the searching beams of our lights. Paul was sounding the horn in never-ceasing, short, staccato blasts.

Nitti waved his hand and disappeared. But a moment later, supporting and steadying Tuti, he stepped back into the light.

Skilfully Paul drew the auto abreast of them and edged it close, perilously, recklessly close to the rocking, rumbling freight-car. Nitti put his lips to Tuti's ear and spoke rapidly.

Slowly the girl swayed and stumbled to the side of the car. As she leaned over timidly, her eyes dropped to the ground flowing swiftly by between her and our machine. With a shudder she turned her head away and buried her face in the crook of her arm. Instantly Nitti had his arm about her shoulder, holding her close, whispering in her ear. She raised her head and gazed into his eyes. Hurriedly, as though she feared to lose her courage at any moment, she stooped, with both hands raised her skirts above her slender knees and launched out into space. She fell in a heap in the tonneau and lay still.

"Come, dearie; quick!" I said. "Out of Nitti's way!" I'd hardly picked her up and placed her in the far corner of the seat when Nitti, leaping lightly, his arms extended wide, landed solidly beside her. And the next instant, the red lights of the train disappeared round a curve!

"That's two murders she won't be responsible for," I heard Paul mutter as he pulled up at one side of the road. A careful examination failed to reveal anything more serious than a scratch or two and a bruised arm on Nitti.

"If I only could have got the engineer and fireman, too," Paul said, looking off in the direction the train had taken.

"They are not on the train," was Nitti's startling announcement. "I saw them jump from engine before we reach bottom of hill below foundry."

"That's where he'd find out—" Paul checked himself.

"That is why I knew to jump when you come," Nitti continued. "But, please to tell how you know we are on train?"

Paul caught my eye with a lightning glance. I saw the purpose of his warning. To tell Nitti how I knew he was on the train would involve explaining why I was under the freight-car when I saw him board it. And that confession would link me inseparably to the reason for the train's running away!

Paul turned to Nitti and spoke in his frank, engaging manner.

"Mr. Nitti, I've no doubt that I could ask you a lot of questions that would be as embarrassing to you and the young lady as some of your questions might be to my wife and myself. For instance, I might ask what the penalty is in Japan for housebreaking and petty larceny. But I'm not that curious—yet.

"We've assisted each other more or less unconsciously and without intent on several occasions in the past. Instead of holding any post-mortems, I suggest we exchange mutual thanks and appreciation—and let it go at that. Let us not lower ourselves to the status of the drowsy canines in the old axiom. We are not sleeping dogs that we should lie. Instead of that, let us shun untruthfulness by a pleasant and particular avoidance of all mention and explanation of the past three days. Er—what do you say?"

Nitti smiled.

"I sink zat dam' good idea."

Paul turned the wheel over to James.

"Where can we take you?"

"Home of my honorable sister, please. Six miles east from Tokyo. Please, you have cigarette with me?" Nitti offered his case.

"Thanks, old man!" Paul answered. "I'll smoke one of my own, if you don't mind."

"S-sank you." And not another word was spoken till we stopped in front of the residence of Nitti's sister.

"Dearie," I said, kissing Tuti good-by, "I wish you every hope and happiness in your future life," I said, "and good hot water and laundry-soap will take the grease stains out of that skirt without leaving any rings."

The only word spoken on the long trip back to Yokohama was the question Paul asked James:

"What time will the morning papers be out?" To which James replied,

"Me no know."

THE mystic dawn of another secretive Oriental day had broken before we stiffly stepped from the car in front of the hotel. The first sight I saw as we entered the lobby was Mr. Kitanoya calmly reading an English-language newspaper. Across the top of one column in large type were the words:

TRAIN RUNS WILD
GOVERNMENT STARTS INVESTIGATION

Government investigation! My knees lost all their strength suddenly. I groped for Paul to steady myself. His eyes were glued to the same head-line. Mr. Kitanoya turned and saw us.

"Good-morning!" he beamed, rising and bowing with every indication of pleasure. "Excus-se, pleas-se—you have breakfast? Not? Pleas-se to breakfast with me? Sank you."

Dumbly we trooped into the dining-room. Kitanoya called a waiter to us.

"You order for me, Paul," I said. "I can't think of a thing I could eat."

When the waiter left, Kitanoya took a telegram from his pocket.

"From my honorable daughter," he smiled.

"You mean your niece," I said. I couldn't help it.

"No, no! Excus-se—my daughter. Genuine. My truth. She telegram she marry to Mr. Nitti. Also she portray how honorable gentleman and wife save her life, also life of my worthy son-in-law. I s-sank you. I not speak ver' well English. I show my gratitude feeling in other fashion."

He looked at us both in turn and nodded his head emphatically.

"My daughter request me explanation to you. It is thusly: I think suspicions that Mr. Nitti like my daughter's money more than my daughter. I respectfully tell Mr. Nitti he not annoy my respectable daughter Tuti. However, he continuation. One day I inform Mr. Nitti my daughter receiving no money from me if she marry to him. Mr. Nitti, using American language, ask me politely to condescend to hell.

"That not proper talk to older man. I cannot lose face. Beside, I ver' angry. I ask apologize. He say he ver' much will apologizing; also he ver' much will tell me why my dairy machine not so good working if I say he marry my daughter. I not like threat. Beside, I not think he does know why miserable machine make blue milk.

"I have contract must furnish Imperial Japanese government twelve machines. I not like to consult other engineers because on account government should discover I unable positively to operate wretched machine. So I send for honorable American engineer and respectable wife. So soon you arriving, I discharge pleasurably Mr. Nitti."

Kitanoya paused and sipped a glass of water.

"Unfortunate, I not make favorable impression with honorable sir. Also my honorable daughter tell sympathy story to honorable lady wife. Nice story—except she forgets truthful facts. She say 'niece' because she not wishing honorable lady to believe she disobedience and horrid daughter." He smiled apologetically. "She not understand in America that means not so much."

Quickly he brightened again.

"But everything ver' complimentary and success now. Mr. Nitti prove he love my daughter by marry her when he sink she not get money. I send telegram of vast forgiveness. I sink Mr. Nitti soon becoming partners with me. Furthermore, I keep term of contract with government and I know why I getting sickening blue milk. I sink it most happy day." He beamed on us.

"Yes, indeed!" Paul croaked. "You—er—you neglected to say anything about the freight train?"

"Oh, excus-se, pleas-se!" Kitanoya took the newspaper from his pocket and opened it. "I forget telling you; when I put machinery on train I no longer responsible. What happens to machinery after that—" He shrugged his shoulders. "It is ver' too bad—for government."

Paul read the notice aloud.

> A freight train loaded with a consignment of dairy machines from the Kitanoya Company was unaccountably deserted by the engine-crew and ran wild last night. Train-dispatchers, warned in time, averted any loss of life. The train, its speed slackened somewhat by the long grade south of the Tokyo yards, was derailed, demolishing several of the cars and strewing machine-parts and pipes over three hundred yards along the roadway.
>
> A hurried investigation proved that the air-brakes had been tampered with, leading to the suspicion that Mr. Kitanoya's recent crusade for reductions in wages of all classes of labor had formed enemies sufficiently bitter and vengeful to risk the long prison-terms they would be certain to receive if apprehended.
>
> Imperial government officials to whom the freight was consigned have already started a thorough and painstaking investigation of the entire affair.

I pushed my coffee-cup to one side weakly. I couldn't have swallowed another drop.

"You finish breakfast?" Kitanoya asked. "That ver' nice. Time is most brief before steamer sailing to-day." He laid two stateroom tickets on the table. "See? I procure reservation—on American ship—ver' nice stateroom. It say on ticket—'Bridal Suite.' I hoping you like." He gave the tickets to Paul. "I sink if your honorable lady wife on steamer, no one might annoyance her questioning regard air-brakes. What? Exception three here, no one else knows."

"Paul," I whispered, "James knows all about it. He helped me."

"Excus-se—who?" Kitanoya asked.

"James—the chauffeur."

"Please not to worry," Kitanoya said to Paul. "James my servant many years. His respectable wife is my daughter's *amah*—what you say 'nurse'—since she a tiny baby."

Which, of course, explained many things, including James' willingness to help Tuti elope.

"And so"—Kitanoya, still addressing my husband, rose—"I sink——"

"I get you." Paul also rose and firmly shook the Jap's hand. "Thanks, old man! Believe me, I appreciate it. You—you're all right. And—er—as far as I'm officially concerned, those machines don't exist."

The plump little man beamed brightly.

"I sink that ver' nice. Honorable gentleman and lady, I wish a happy and meditative voyage."

With another bow and a smile, Kitanoya passed out of our lives.

"Come on, Birdie," said Paul; "let's get packed and aboard the steamer before you put your shoulder to the wheel and start something else."

"Yes," I said wearily; "I've done about everything I could. Anything I take up now would come under the head of new business."

JUST before the steamer sailed, a messenger-boy came running to our bridal suite and gave me a small package. Wrapped around a darling sandalwood box was a note.

> HONORABLE LADY AND GENTLEMAN: Please to accept grateful gift from my husband and self.
>
> TUTI.

In the box was a ring for me, a black pearl surrounded with four large diamonds; and for my husband—one of those reliable cigar-lighters, of gold, with a ruby set in the center of Graham's initials!

Sitting side by side on the upper deck that evening, refreshed by a good long sleep and a wonderful dinner with wine, I broke a long silence.

"Paul," I said, "at least Mr. Nitti was a square, upright young man, wasn't he?"

"Comparatively speaking," Paul responded. "You know what he is taking to Vladivostok, don't you?"

"No."

"A copy of the patterns and specifications of our dairy machine. He's interested in a foundry up there."

"Do you mean to say that Russia will soon see the Holstein Machine Company's pasteurizing plant?"

"Yes. Nitti helped himself when he found Kitanoya was going to fire him."

"But, Paul," I said, "once in Russia, it's only a step into Germany."

"It ought to feel right at home there," Paul answered. "That's where our company got it from."

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

*Introducing an Author New to Everybody's—*

# Trapped

*A Rare Girl, a Rarer Father, a Stalwart but Shy Young Man, and, Best of All, They're Handled in a Way That Will Remind You of O. Henry*

## By Harry Esty Dounce

MR. MASTIN told Smith, his chauffeur, that he wanted brook-trout for dinner, as guests were expected. He told him the number of persons to be served, counting in himself and the family. He explained that one trout or two small ones would be enough for each, a dinner being of several courses and big portions of the fish being incorrect. He mentioned what else there was to be—cantaloups first, in the new fashion, then a jellied gumbo, grilled mushrooms gathered in the pastures by Miss Dorothy herself, boned capon, alligator-pears with French dressing, and so on, not forgetting the preliminary Bronxes and some fine wines. Didn't that sound good? Smith agreed that it did. Mr. Mastin had none of these hifalutin, newly rich ideas about treating servants like dirt. He had been fairly well off for some time, even before the war. And he was democratic.

"I don't know about melons and those pear things," he reflected. "Pretty much the same breed of cats. But I guess it'll be all right. They're both always good."

"Wilkins could tell you, sir," said Smith.

Wilkins, of course, was the English butler. Mr. Mastin looked hard at Smith, who met the look with an open, attentive countenance.

"I don't want Wilkins telling me. I'm getting sick of Wilkins. Any time I can't order a dinner to suit me without asking Wilkins, we'll go to a hotel. And now, what I'm counting on you for, Smith——"

Mr. Mastin realized that he'd been a little short. Smith was a good man. He wasn't fresh. Any of several acquaintances of the Mastins would jump at the chance to get him. And he was about to ask an unusual service of him—one that lots of chauffeurs would kick on just on principle.

He pulled out quite a dramatic roll of bills, leafed them, and selected a two-dollar bill, which he held up.

"What I'm counting on you for is the trout. You take the afternoon off and go up the crick—creek. If you're back at six-thirty with trout enough, you win another two-spot. I don't want to ring in stale swordfish or those curled-up French sardines—not when I got a trout-stream on my place."

He tendered the bill. Smith held back.

"I don't know much about it, Mr. Mastin. Trout was scarce in the part of the big town where I was raised."

"Why, I couldn't even catch one with worms till you showed me how," said Mr. Mastin.

"It isn't only that. The young ladies have fished a lot lately, and the brook's pretty well stirred up."

"My part of it may be. Carver don't fish."

"No; but his land's posted, and I hear he's a crab and more or less of a nut."

"Smith, I don't want advance alibis. I want trout. I don't have to know where you got 'em. That's up to you; but have 'em here on time. You'll find plenty of tackle in my den."

Again he tendered the bill, but Smith shook his head, smiling.

"That's all right, Mr. Mastin. I'll be glad to get off and wet a line."

Yet, left to himself, he showed no breathless alacrity about it. He grinned at the plenty of tackle the den afforded. Mr. Mastin, having bought a summer place with a trout-stream, had visited a sporting-goods store, where he had—as Smith would probably have put it—shot the works. Beautiful, costly gear, from salmon-rods and bass-flies down—all for one scant mile of trout-brook nowhere three steps wide!

Smith rummaged and found a steel rod, old and scaly. This had once, long since, been Mr. Mastin's only rod. He had caught perch and suckers with it somewhere in a canal. Smith put it together. He found some short leaders under the nine-foot drawn-gut patricians, and a packet of plain snelled hooks. Out by the stables he dug, and put a tin can in his jacket pocket.

Mr. Mastin, being a gentleman and a great reader, was learning to fish his trout-stream exclusively with the fly. It wasn't Smith's trout-stream, and Smith was a chauffeur. Besides, it was August, when trout are coy toward artificial lures and the brook was very brushy. Mr. Mastin had caused the brush and trees to be cleared away from the likelier holes near the house, in order to give his back casts room. He had not understood why fish did not rise immediately after the clearing had been done. These holes Smith passed by on his way up-stream.

Smith was wearing an old livery, with the leggings and the cap. His face—but no one ever looks at a chauffeur's face. At least, no one ever should. The housemaids admired it. He moved slowly, picking his way round boulders and over roots, walking with a heavy limp or lurch. His recommendation from a former employer, presented to Mr. Mastin, had mentioned that he had once damaged a leg, wrecking his car to save another driven by a woman. He was modest when questioned about it.

Well up toward Carver's line-fence in the woods he began to fish. He was cold-blooded, businesslike. Five feet from the brook, below a bend, was a real hole between a stump's roots in the bank. It was not much larger than his cap, but down it there was water that chuckled and glinted. Smith took his line in his hand and lowered the bait—and a little trout, gloriously colored, wriggled and danced on the moss at his feet. He killed it and lined his creel fittingly for it, dipping a handful of ferns in the icy water. A butcher's trick, that first catch, from the point of view of a sportsman like Mr. Mastin!

Smith moved on, footing cautiously, fishing craftily. Even a countryside urchin would have allowed that Smith knew trout. Here and there he managed to get one of lawful size to keep.

He came to the line-fence, of woven wire newly topped with barbed, and newly backed up with large and glaring notice-boards. He consumed a cigarette as he studied their wording. Parts of it were unusual. All persons were warned that they trespassed *at their own risk*. He had seven trout. Mr. Mastin would require sixteen of the sizes he was catching.

Across the fence the hillside slope was gentler, the brook more tranquil. It emerged from a double thicket of alders down in a broad gully that had once been a steep ravine. On one side were the woods, divided from the alders by an aisle of grass, as if an old lumber-road had followed the brook. On the other side, up out of the gully, was a stubble field, and over the rise and comfortably distant, Smith knew, was the Carver house.

SMITH had no menial reverence for notice-boards as such. He wasn't afraid to trespass at his own risk. That might have meant a bull or a dog; he knew that the Carvers' live stock included neither. The phrase had set him wondering idly what Mr. Mastin would do if he were caught. For all the reputation of five John Carvers, from the Revolutionary statesman down, as brilliant eccentrics—crabs and more or less nuts—they were an illustrious, historic Boston family. Mr. Mastin often professed a contempt for family, in which profession Smith did not believe.

He dropped his cigarette stub and crawled under the woven wire.

The question now was how to reach the brook through those dense alders. Half an hour's work with a hatchet seemed the only way. A man in boots couldn't have waded up-stream—there was too much fallen brush. But scouting along the old road, with a wide-awake eye on the gully's horizon, Smith discovered a neat path or tunnel through the alders, freshly cut, and, farther along, the opening of another one. It must be that Carver did fish, after all.

Smith promptly took advantage of the first. The hole it led to yielded a plump quarter-pounder and two smaller trout. This was more like it! He backed out and went on to the second tunnel.

In that one, the footing wasn't quite so good. A few steps inside it you came to a bog hole, a basin of oozy black muck. Carver or his axman had not bothered to cut a détour, but you could cross dry-footed, for in the middle of the bog hole was a chunk of wood with a tussock of long grass round it.

Smith stepped out on to the chunk with his right, or lame, foot, steadying himself by an alder branch. The chunk sank—didn't dodge or settle—it sank with a queer smoothness that Smith instantaneuosly distrusted. But before he could get back off it, his ankle was seized and held in some sort of trap.

He swung his left foot over, balanced a moment and then, perforce, sat down. The muck's cold wetness struck through his trousers and crept up his back and down his legs. He hunched himself close to the trap and tried to examine it. Something big and immovable was buried underneath. To this the mechanism was fixed firmly.

It had no jaws. A ring of sliding plates with curved and rounded edges had closed like one kind of camera-shutter. Touching his ankle, they had stopped and locked. The trap was not a cruel one—it was even accommodating—for it tilted and allowed his leg a comfortable angle. But he couldn't budge it. His ankle was caught—caught for keeps.

It must not be supposed that Smith had come in silence to that conclusion. He hadn't yelled in surprise and terror, had hardly raised his voice. But if you had been near by in the alders, you would have heard him.

He quickly gave up wrenching at the trap. Mosquitoes and black-flies were abroad, and he felt in his jacket pockets. Cigarettes all right—matches soaked. But, resuming his investigation of the mechanism, his fingers found a little oilskin packet in the muck and grease. Inside was a bit of sheet aluminum penciled:

I am sorry about the flies. The end of a cord is buried about a foot to the left of the grass. By pulling, you will obtain cigars. I shall not keep you waiting long if I am at home at the time of your trespass—undertaken, you will recall, at your own risk.

Smith grinned. He clawed in the muck and found the cord. He took a chance and pulled, and a tin box jumped out of the alders and slid across to him. It contained cigars in corked test-tubes, matches in another. Again he took a chance. A perfectly good cigar! The aluminum card he stowed carefully in a vest pocket.

THE sun was still high above the gully's rim when Mr. Carver came. He came through the alders from the other side, crossed the brook and stood considering his captive. A gaunt gray man with a scraggly mustache, in old clothes that had not hung well on him when new. He looked, not vindictive or crazy but like an elderly, unsuccessful poet. Not that a chauffeur would have thought of those terms for it. Smith, hugging his knees, turned up an insolent stare.

"This is too bad," said Mr. Carver. "You are the chauffeur."

Smith took his time.

"Yeh?" said Smith.

"Yeh," said Mr. Carver, without rudeness; "you're Mastin's chauffeur, and I hoped for Mastin. You swear like a man of at least some superficial cultivation."

"That right?" said Smith. "Well, you got to excuse it. If I'd knowed you was hiding round here, I'd kep' my language refined."

"I wasn't," said Mr. Carver, unaffected by the sarcasm. "You didn't know, of course, that the nearest of those boulders there is bogus and contains a special transmitter, such as they use in telephone exchanges. The receiver, a 'loud-speaker,' is in my study. Now that I think of it, Mastin wouldn't swear as you did. He would revert to type. Still, a chauffeur who swears with educated intonations might have misled any one over the 'phone."

"For Pete's sake, Captain, talk United States!" said Smith.

"One moment," said Mr. Carver. " 'Yeh' is in character—with you, but not with 'knowed.' You ought to have said 'knew'—'If I'd 've knew,' or even 'known.' And 'talk United States' is fifteen years old.

Metropolitan chauffeurs keep up to date."

"Balmy," said Smith to the cigar, despairingly.

" 'Balmy' is cockney, and old enough now to be heard in good London society. 'Cuckoo' is the equivalent Americanism of the hour. But I beg your pardon. These things are a hobby of mine, and I keep up to date myself. Why didn't you try, when you found you were trapped, to hide your rod and basket?"

"Swell chance to throw' em far enough, with the bushes so thick!" said Smith.

"So I had calculated. Suppose I look at the contents of your basket."

"And suppose you don't." Smith cuddled it like a football with his left arm.

"Oh, let's be sensible and friendly," said Mr. Carver. "In your case, all I require is information. There's a constable down in the village, and he's a friend of mine."

"*You* won't call no constable!"

"And why not?"

"Where do you get off, setting steel traps? I ain't only trespassed. I can raise hell with you——"

"I'm afraid you can't. Think what will happen. You tell the authorities your fantastic story of being trapped. I smile at it. Your ankle doesn't bear a mark to prove it. Still, suppose they're gullible enough to come here and investigate. A few shovelfuls of mud and buckets of water will have erased all tracks. As for the trap, by the time they get here, it doesn't exist. Strictly speaking, it doesn't now."

"Yeh. I noticed that," said Smith, wiggling his leg so that the trap churned and squelched in the muck.

"It doesn't, though, in a low-grade imagination like a constable's—or like Mastin's. That trap is unique, the only one of its kind. It holds a man fast without hurting or marking him. I invented it. In fact, I made it—my machine-shop is another of my hobbies. There 'ain't no sich trap,' although here you are, in it."

"I got you," said Smith. "But there ain't no such thing as blood out of a stone, or damages out of me, neither."

"There is, however, the village lockup, also the county jail. So hadn't you better hand me the basket? If you kept that piece of aluminum with my note, and are counting on it for evidence against me, I assure you that you won't have it when the constable arrives."

SMITH grinned and handed over his creel. Then, for good measure, he added the aluminum card. Mr. Carver smiled and laid out the trout in a row.

"A handsome catch for this brook. I might have known Mastin was likely to send some one, instead of doing his angling—and trespassing—himself."

"Who's this Masting?"

"Oh, really!" said Mr. Carver. "You have no sense of dialogue—'blood out of a stone' was a dreadfully incongruous locution—but you surely have common sense enough to realize that I've seen you driving his cars. The only question is whether he sent you or whether you had the afternoon off and went fishing."

"It's my dish," said Smith. "I always done a lot of fishing when I had a chance."

"Yes; so I judged from your catch. A sedulously New Yorky chauffeur who is expert on trout! But, being expert, you're the person he'd send if he specially wanted some trout. What, then, would he want them for? Not for a present to some one—he doesn't make presents of that graceful and unostentatious kind. I must find out if he's entertaining to-night or to-morrow; he'd hardly know enough to want them strictly fresh."

"Marvelous, Holmes!" jeered Smith.

"Why try to shield him? It can't be from personal loyalty. And if I made trouble for you, you must see that he wouldn't help you. He'd cast you off and help me, to save his face."

"This mud's nice and juicy," Smith said, slapping a mosquito.

"I rather thought it might be. Let me sum up without further delay. You are a young man of some cultivation, masquerading for your own reasons as what you would, in character, call a 'roughneck.' Your employer, an animal of a species you loathe as much as I do, has sent you—I feel safe in assuming—on my posted land to fish my waters. All I ask you to do is sign an admission that he has. I shall then so use it, quietly, as to prevent him from annoying me in future. You won't lose your good reputation. In all likelihood you won't even lose your place. Whereas, if you refuse to sign the admission, you'll lose both—and my purpose will be accomplished, anyway."

SMITH lit a second cigar, watching a bright little bird that was flitting among the alder branches.

"Take your time," said Mr. Carver.

"A bargain's a bargain," said Smith, at length. "Before I go signing anything, I want a few facts myself."

"No," said Mr. Carver; "you don't—if you'll excuse my contradicting you. You want to gain time—stall, I mean—in the hope that he'll send some one up here after you. He won't. You'd hardly be expected back with your fish before six o'clock, and then he wouldn't be sending right away. So ask your questions."

"What would you done," said Smith, "if you'd caught this Masting instead of me?"

"I'd have shown him, as I've shown you, the absurdity of his telling the authorities he had been trapped, and then I'd have sent for the constable at once."

"I don't think it; but never mind. What would you done——"

"One moment. That 'I don't think it' came quite naturally. That's backwoods eastern Canadian. You are not. But you may have been thrown a good deal of late with Ontario backwoodsmen. Were you in military service overseas?"

"It's my turn cross-examining," said Smith.

"So it is. Very well. What would I 'done'——"

"If you'd caught, say, one of this Masting's daughters?"

Mr. Carver was taken aback.

"His daughters? Do they fish?"

"If he's got any, they would, wouldn't they? Not that they'd ketch much," said Smith.

"Ah," said Mr. Carver, frowning like a chess-player in difficulties. "That is a really good question. That might easily have happened, too. What I should have done, I think, would have depended on her. If she had been calm and sensible, I'd have released her at once, with a gentle warning. If she had been—ah— hysterical, it would have been awkward, I admit."

"You said it! 'Awkward' is right. Your trap idea was a dud, and you're lucky it's me you caught. What you got against Masting that's bad enough to make you lose your head like that and pull——"

"You needn't rub it in," said Mr. Carver. "And, of course, you know well enough what I have against him. Until lately the whole valley was owned by desirable people——"

"Yeh. People from Boston," said Smith.

"It *is* a fair equivalent. By desirable people from Boston. But now, since deflation began, some of them have had to sell, and profiteers of the Mastin stripe have bought. He is the first one who has bought a property adjoining mine.

"In this country, you know, private property isn't private with respect to shooting and fishing—just as game laws are not laws; they can't be rigidly enforced, and the sentiment of the masses doesn't support them. There can't be a warden in every thicket; we can't all afford iron fences ten feet high. So these rights and laws are merely a record of the best minority sentiment, and a Mastin, who shares no such sentiment, will violate them any time it occurs to him.

"He wouldn't have done it here if the valley had recognized him socially, but when his amusing overtures had failed, I knew that annoyance was only a question of time. I could, of course, have stationed a watchman here. But that would have provoked a Mastin, and a petty line-fence squabble would have resulted. I had to deal with him effectively at the start. Hence my trap, which has, although your point about the risks I ran and overlooked is well taken, happily worked to my complete satisfaction."

Smith stopped yawning.

"Come down to tacks, Captain. You're over my head," he complained.

"Oh, no, I'm not. Your head is widely different from a tack's. You understand me perfectly. What's more, you are sympathetic—in the first place, because you are much more like me than like your employer; in the second, because you're an angler and a devoted nature student, who would feel about these things just as I do myself."

"Hot dog!" said Smith. "Where d'yer get the nature-student thing?"

Mr. Carver chuckled.

"A moment ago your attention was distracted by a little bird. Although you are in a disagreeable predicament, and although our conversation was then at a fairly critical point, your eyes followed the bird—not absently but intently, with eager interest. It was a mourning warbler, a rare species."

Smith laughed, but not derisively.

"I'll give yer credit! You're good!" he cried. "Come on, Cap; have a heart! Lemme loose, on the strength of the mourning warbler. You keep them fish. I'll tell 'em you caught me and beat me up, or anything you say——"

"I will let you loose with real pleasure when you've signed that statement for me."

Smith blew a beautiful double smoke ring.

"Going to sign it?"

"Not by a damn sight!" said Smith.

"I'm sorry. In that event, I must detain you a little longer. You're too big a catch for an amateur trapper to handle without help."

He gathered up the trout into the creel and went away as he had come.

WITHIN a few minutes, within a length of time that even one trapped in a watery bog hole, fighting mosquitoes and black-flies, would sense as only a few minutes, Smith heard him returning, alone. Or—no; not him—this was a woman coming, for she tangled her skirt in the raspberry canes on the other side of the gully, and through the alders Smith saw it as she stooped to free it.

When she came across the brook, he had a better view, and his heart began to pound. Also he blushed—the painful, turgid sort of blush. Who would have thought a chauffeur could feel mortification so deeply, even on being found in a ridiculous position by a young and attractive woman? For this tall, slim girl was undeniably attractive; she was more, especially when seen out-of-doors—flushed from rapid walking. The dark hair under her brown beret was parted, an old lost fashion that became her greatly. Her steady brown eyes were unusually bright. A young Victorian poet—not a post-bellum Manhattan chauffeur—would have called her a sweet hamadryad of the Berkshire pines. Which would have irritated her past endurance.

She didn't start or stare or giggle or otherwise make strange of Smith. She came straight to him and held out what looked like an open box of salve.

"What's this?" he demanded, trying to sound ever so gruff and blustery.

"Fly dope," she told him. "Don't be afraid of it. 'Tisn't half so rank as citronella."

Smith took it mechanically.

"What's the big idea?" he croaked as before.

"The idea is to rub some on your face and the back of your neck. Look alive! You're perfectly able to do it for yourself. Would you like anything else? A drink of water? I'm sorry, but you know the doctors won't let you have a cigarette."

As Smith was smoking a large and potent cigar, this last surely seemed to him utterly crazy. At least, if it did not, he made no sign.

"Who are you?" He did better at gruffness this time.

"Ah, to be sure! Who am I?" said the girl blandly. "Who am I, and where are you, and is this heaven and am I an angel? Why not murmur, 'Mother!' Lots of flirtatious convalescents did that for effect."

"Don't get yer," Smith told her severely. "If you're trying to 'make' a guy, this ain't the way to begin."

She sighed.

"Shamming loss of memory never works. It's always detected. I believe they begin by humoring the patient. Know that my name is Laura Carver, that it was my father who was here just now, and that he'll be back in his study in about five minutes. Which reminds me."

She picked up a loose stone, wriggled among the alders to the boulder Mr. Carver had mentioned, and crashed her stone against it, making a hollow, crackling sound.

"The line is now out of order," she said. "Why don't you use that stuff? There's nothing noble in being eaten by flies."

Smith daubed himself with the fly dope.

"And now," said Miss Carver, "we've got perhaps an hour. Daddy won't send for the constable—bless him! He'll sit there listening and chewing his mustache to give you time to weaken. Then he'll come back."

"Come back with a posse, huh?" said Smith. "Have you got a key to this trap?"

She laughed, and a hermit-thrush in the woods overheard and began to sing.

"It isn't time for a key if I had one—I haven't, by the way—and as for a posse, you don't know daddy, do you? He was so pleased with his great idea, just like a little boy—had such fun inventing the trap and sending to Pittsfield for 'Frank the Young Trapper' and other standard works. He forgot all about what the thing was for while he was making it, and now it's caught some one, he's frightfully embarrassed. At heart, daddy wouldn't inconvenience a black-fly if he could help it."

"No; of course not!" said Smith. "He'd only leave a guy get the gate from Mastin. He wouldn't inconvenience him—oh, no!"

"He'd find him a better place if he did," said Mr. Carver's daughter loyally. Then she was pensive. "The thing I don't quite understand is your coming our side of the fence. That wasn't like you, even if they'd sent you. Nevertheless, did they? Please don't say, 'Not by a damn sight'—I want to know. I won't insist on your signing a written statement." Smith made helpless, whistling noises. "Go on," she encouraged kindly.

"Wh-where the mischief were you?"

"I? In the study, of course. Daddy's great eavesdropping telephone worked all the time—until strafed. It is now strafed. How stoical he must be thinking you are! I trust your silence won't alarm him. I don't believe it will."

The thrush supplied a long pause with an intermezzo.

"They sent me, if you must know," said Smith at last.

"They did? And was that why you came?"

"Why wouldn't it be why?"

"For several reasons. You knew whose land this was."

"No fault of your father's if I didn't. I can read."

"And yet you came. Perhaps—perhaps you came on the chance of seeing—" She stopped and uprooted some grasses. "Just why did you come?"

Smith was very rude.

"You want to know a lot of things, don't you?"

"Only one or two. I know the rest already. For instance, I know why you're working as a chauffeur. Nothing open in your line, no construction going on—and you were too proud to let people know you were back, except Will Brewster, who gave you your recommendation for Mr. Mastin. You had to have outdoor work for a year or two——"

"Your friend Brewster—whoever he is," Smith said, choosing words deliberately, "talks too much with his mouth."

She ignored this utter insolence, as a well-bred young woman should in conversation with a neighbor's servant.

"I *don't* know," she went on, seeming not to watch him, "just why you picked out the Mastins—I mean, I don't know if Miss Mastin or Miss Dorothy was the reason——"

He looked straight up at her and spoke in a new way.

"The reason was one hundred and sixty dollars a month and board, and you know it as well as I do!" he said hotly.

INSTEAD of looking affronted, Miss Carver, sitting comfortably on a log, looked rather pleased with herself.

"I note your statement," she murmured. "Of course, a manly young chauffeur has bright prospects with such a family. It's nothing unheard of. They're both of them—oh, sufficiently attractive, too."

When Smith could speak, he reverted to his former way of speech.

"Don't lemme detain you, will you?" he said politely.

"Poor fellow!" said Miss Carver. "How very sad! You don't recognize me at all, do you? Complete loss of memory, isn't it?"

"My memory's O. K.," said Smith, with emphasis.

"Yes. Double-personality cases often think it is, I understand. And so we have to recall their former selves to them. Yours was a young engineer in Gregg & Osborne's office——"

"Never heard of 'em!"

"Of course not; but be patient. You were in Canada on a camping-trip. A war, a large, messy war, broke out in Europe. You wanted to be in it. You came down to Toronto, enlisted, trained at Valcartier, went over with the Princess Pats. Being a dispatch-rider in their part of Second Wipers, you didn't get enough green gas to kill you, but you got some, and a blighty wound too, and so——"

"Why, yes," Smith interrupted, trying to look dazed. "That's straight about Second Wipers. But later on, in another show, I got shell-shocked, and I'm afraid——"

"But you just told me your memory was O. K. It isn't, you see," said Miss

Carver, with relish; "for *that* isn't straight at all. You did get something later on, another wound of some kind. But not shell-shock—you never got that."

"How do you know?"

It was her turn to speak in a new way.

"Not from you!" she cried. "Why did you stop writing after the Passchendaele show in '17? Why weren't there any more leaves, any more A. W. O. L. trips to Paris, after that? Why—oh, what's the use, Jack? Why did you come to the Mastins this summer? Why did you cross our fence this afternoon?"

"My name's John," said Smith. He said it wearily. "You got me mixed up with somebody else, I guess."

"All right," said Miss Carver, wearily, too. "If you say so, I expect I have." She rose to go, then flashed round at him. "Why," she demanded, "did you stay in that silly trap? Why do you stay there now?"

This remarkably silly question made Smith sit up straight. It is quite a feat in a bog hole and a trap. He sat so for at least a minute, staring at her in the early twilight of the gully. Then he sagged back and bowed his head, which his mud-caked hands supported. After all, you don't expect spirit in a chauffeur.

"Is your memory better—now?" she panted.

"Not a bit." But he didn't lift his head.

"Going to stay there—now?"

"What else can I do?"

She laughed again. It was not a mocking laugh. It was, on the whole, a joyous one, although there was an undertone of pain. This time the thrush did not answer it. He was a wise musician, and he knew when he was beaten.

SMITH sat as before. The twilight deepened and deepened by slow pulsations.

Miss Carver bestirred herself. She looked over the nearest clump of white-birch saplings, chose a sturdy straight one with a fork some six feet up, and cut it down close to the ground with a big jack-knife. She dragged it to her log and began to trim it.

Smith observed, and tried to joke.

"Think you'll need a club?"

But she was serious.

"Isn't it futile and childish to persist in being Smith—you aren't doing it well at all—and pretending not to remember when you know I know you do? Will Brewster, who talks too much with his mouth, is a favorite cousin of mine."

"He's a friend of mine, or was."

"He still is."

"That remains to be seen."

"All right. Meanwhile, be sensible."

"That's what I'm doing," Smith asserted stoutly. "John Smith, who can't remember things, and won't be drawn into discussions, who doesn't recognize you, and won't, is the sensible thing to be. It isn't what you call childishness. You might take that for granted——"

Miss Carver's knife industriously lopped the twigs.

"Anyway, 'Smith' is my story, and I'll stick to him," he said. "Good-night. It's getting dark. Your father will wonder about you."

"Good-night, Smith," she said sweetly. "I've camped in Algonquin Park myself. 'Good-night' is the rural 'good-evening' up there—you say it when you arrive. I'm just arriving."

She finished trimming the sapling.

"I'm going to tell your story Smith a story of my own," she said. "It's often done in silly fiction, when the maidenly heroine wants to recall her recreant lover's memory. Once upon a time there was a young man with a New England conscience, and he was gassed and wounded and they took him to Boulogne. One of the volunteer nurses there was an American girl. Our hero was in her ward, and it developed, among other things, that his best friend and a cousin of hers were identical, and so——"

"For the Lord's sake drop it!" said Smith.

"And so one of those silly-fiction hospital romances resulted. But don't make any mistake about our heroine, will you, Smith? She wasn't as blushing and diffident as she'd be in a short story. And she has heaps of letters that would prove breach of promise anywhere."

Smith winced.

"The letters came regularly for two years, with occasional reunions in Paris to vary the monotony. After that Passchendaele battle they stopped—leaving her to conclude that he'd gone west. Now, try and think why they stopped, Smith. Try and think!"

Smith sighed.

"It don't need much thinking, does it?

When a man—when a guy quits writing to a Jane—when he just plain quits——"

"Yes," said Miss Carver; "just plain quits. Go on."

"The reason's clear enough, ain't it?"

"It's supposed to be. And if the—the Jane had any proper sentimental pride, she'd let it go at that; wouldn't she? But you know, Smith, three years as a nurse over there didn't leave a Jane much proper sentimental pride. They only left her terribly hard to lie to."

"Who's lying?"

"Whoever is, he's no good at it. He'll never keep a chauffeur's job if he can't do it better than this."

"Laura, if a chauffeur can give his word of honor——"

"He can't in this instance. Not to a cousin of Will Brewster, who violates confidences—with his mouth!"

As Smith would no doubt have said, there was no comeback.

"Now, a man," said Miss Carver easily, "even a man with wound-stripes and decorations, may still have lots of sentimental pride—so much that, because he thinks, for purely sentimental reasons, that he oughtn't to hold a girl to her engagement——"

"Purely sentimental?"

"Simon-purely."

"Sentiment against offering her a chauffeur's income and social position?"

"How about a rising engineer's?"

"The engineer's rise," said Smith, "is off. And so is the other thing. Good-night."

"Candid and explicit—and ineffectual. Did you know that both Mr. Gregg and Mr. Osborne are among daddy's oldest friends?"

"Did you know an engineer had to be active and able-bodied?"

"No. I knew he needn't. They don't all climb round like monkeys among the girders. Some of them do office things."

"Your daddy'd be so likely to help a man in these circumstances, wouldn't he?"

"Not in these circumstances, perhaps. But he'd be the first person to help him if they were slightly altered."

She stopped.

"I don't follow you," said Smith.

"I hope to persuade you to," said Miss Carver, beginning to have trouble with her light and chatty tone. "I haven't much time to do it in—he'll soon be coming back, or some one from down there will come in search of you. Over yonder on the road is a flivver—mine—I left it there. And down in the village are a town clerk and a justice of the peace. I've known them both since I was a little girl."

"Laura—no!" he groaned, like a man on the rack.

"Smith," she said sternly, "come out of that trap!"

And she handed him her long fork-ended stick. In doing so she found it necessary to step down into the bog hole and bend over him.

"You did use the fly dope, didn't you?" she said presently, scrubbing with her handkerchief. "Will you be able to manage by yourself?"

"I think so. Here's hoping your crutch doesn't break," said the beaten and abject Smith.

"I'd welcome a graceful admission," she murmured, "that the reason, the real reason, why Mr. Mastin's chauffeur came on our land——"

"Whatever it was, he'll tell the world he's glad he came!" Smith shouted. At which, in spite of the fly dope, she bent over him again.

WHEN at last they climbed out of the gully and crossed the stubble field, it was dark. They hitched along together slowly, exploring the path ahead with her electric torch. As soon as its flashes could no longer be seen from the bottom of the gully, a second torch blazed there among the trees. Mr. Carver, the amateur trapper, had returned. Indeed, it was a serious question, which only the black-flies could have answered, whether he had ever been away.

He stood beside the bog hole for some time holding the light-spot of his torch upon it. At last he chuckled, a chuckle not malevolent in the least, however wistful and lonely it may have been.

" 'Why, as a woodcock to mine own springe, Osric'," he quoted, chuckling. All brilliant, eccentric John Carvers have talked to themselves more or less.

Trailing away from the trap was a canvas harness, with shoulder-straps and belts and other intricate arrangements. Held in the trap was a leather legging, in which was a costly and scientific artificial foot.

# Black Mountain

*There Is Almost Always Some Strange Influence in Men's Lives. With Ran, This Was Symbolized by a Mountain—a Lump of Dirt and Stone. It Was His Ghost; It was Like Something Threatening Over Him*

## By Mary Brecht Pulver

Illustrations by Harvey Emrich

AGAINST the dimpled current of the river, with its thick, tangled margins, the sunlight broke in a shower of crystal-points. So white-hot, so diamond-bright these quivering javelins of sun, the eye grew weary, coveted the grateful depths of the forest.

Randall Geer, walking the riffs mid-stream, splashing heavily in fishing-boots, with his rod and creel, blinked under his old felt hat, pulled it lower over his eyes, and turned slowly shoreward.

It was too hot, too near noon. The bass weren't biting. Later, toward evening, he would have better luck. He shifted the basket on his hip, where his morning's catch lay, and came slowly in. Once he bent to dash handfuls of water against his hot face. Once again he stopped, looked about him with slow, appraising glance, as though he were newly assessing old, familiar scenes that had taken on new values.

It was true. They were at once both old and new, as he was both the old and the new. For the Randall Geer of to-day was not the Randall Geer of three days ago. Then he had set his feet tentatively, diffidently, though eagerly, on an immemorial trail. Now he had passed the boundary, had passed it, indeed, when the Reverend Silas Stokes had put Lila's hand into his three mornings ago.

He was a bridegroom of three days' standing, and it was the second time he had turned at midday to home and his own woman, even as primordial man, bearing his day's catch of food.

The significance of it, of his own sudden, quiet merging with older simplicities, with established human customs—his elevation from a detached, unclassified status to the responsibilities of marriage—spoke dumbly in his mind. Wordlessly there passed through his consciousness a feeling strangely compounded of reverence and gratitude and a deep humility toward life.

Worldlessly it passed, I say, for Randall Geer was not articulate—even mentally. His feelings laid a dumb spell upon him, a witchery of soul beyond his understanding. He only reacted to them instinctively, sensitive, attuned as he had been all his life to these half-muted chords of vagrant emotion.

You would not have suspected this, to see him standing so, white-limned in the sun, baked dark of hands and face, a tall, gangling country youth of twenty-four in flannel shirt and trousers, with a stained old hat pierced by air-holes, adorned with fish-hooks. Yet there was a certain wildness and litheness about him in harmony with the wild river and the thick herbage, with the great hills that offered their full green bosoms to the August sun. They were all part of one harmony.

It was very still and lovely. For a little, Randall Geer's spirit drank the sweet peace and promise of it; then he lifted his eyes to the hilltops and his face darkened.

There it was, there to northward—a detached, aristocratic façade of slate-blue—dark even against this August richness, competing, as ever—warring with sunlight and love—yes, hope—holding its own, as it had always held—Black Mountain. Just to look at it was to have the feeling of a cloud passing before the sun—a darkening of the spirit, a portent of shadow, of sadness. It blotted out the vivid glory all about him. Something like a shiver passed over the boy.

Then, with a resolute shake of his shoulders, he turned and splashed down-stream. There to the left was "home," a peep of brown tent-roof among screening foliage where the bank sloped down smoothly, paved with glossy pine-needles, where the river lay in a smooth, shallow pool. Lila would be there. Randall put up his hands and cried the hillman's challenge:

"Coo-hoo-oo!"

There was almost immediately a faint echo: "Co-hoo-oo!"

And the young man chuckled.

"Little rascal—she's out in the water again."

Lila had pretended—had *pretended* with fine, bustling, housewifely interest—that the duties of home claimed her in his absence; yet he'd bet a dollar she was out in the water somewhere, larking it like a little schoolboy.

HE WAS not mistaken. On a low flat rock a dozen feet from the bank he saw a girl in a blue frock and coarse sun-hat. She was sitting composedly with her bare feet in the water, watching him.

"You rascal!" He laughed. "This the way you do your housework, is it?

"Oh, I'm all done workin', Ran; I washed all the towels and even the sheets. They're all hangin' on the line."

"Clippers'll bite your toes," he laughed, splashing up. "You'll hurt yourself on the stones."

"Oh, it's all sandy here—it ain't more'n eight inches—it's so cool and nice. Oh, Ran, I'm so glad you come in!"

She stood up to receive him, and that former sense of reverence and strange humility surged through the boy—a sense of figuring in some miracle. She was his—his—and so pretty and so little. The top of her dark curly head was only breast-high. She was colored like a jewel, he thought, or like all the river-scape—the blue of kingfisher and flush of cardinal, the sparkle of sun on water, the freshness of growing green.

Yet she was only a shapely, soft little creature in a cheap blue frock, holding up a small, rosy, tanned face, with a wide, sweet red mouth, and warm, thick-lashed brown eyes for his kiss, holding up her blue skirts to where the water lipped her ankles. Randall held her close a minute, looking down at her feet where the river played softly over them.

"If you ain't got the *prettiest* feet, Lila"—and his arm tightened around her—"the prettiest feet, little one—like two white pearls——"

"Like two white slugs." Lila laughed. "That's more like it." But she nestled against him, and he looked with slow wonder at the smooth, warm brown of her cheeks, the tiny mole on her chin, a faint down on her neck—"pin-feathers," he called it in jest—that deepened and grew into tiny rings of soft hair at the edge of her knot. He could put his emotion into only one phrase.

"Lila," he asked, "you—you lovin' me?"

"I'm keepin' pretty busy these days—thank you," she laughed up at him, her head tipped back. "Anybody'd think you was on a honeymoon, Mister Randall Geer——"

"Well, mebbe I am—mebbe I am," he chuckled, with slow wit. "Say—but ain't it pretty—everything here—*pretty*—all but that." He looked up at the contours of Black Mountain. The girl followed his eyes.

"Oh, that! Oh, Ran, you got the funniest notions! 'Sif the poor ole mountain'd do anybody hurt. Just a lump o' dirt and stone. You're haunted, Ran—an' that's your ghost." She nestled against him again with a little sidling motion. "What's the matter of you, anyhow—ain't I here? Haven't you got me to protec' you? An' then scared of a little ole mountain! That for your little ole mountain! That for anything!" she scoffed, shaking a small clenched fist at the distant peak. "Don't you never let me ketch you hurtin' my Ran," she scolded at it, and the boy snatched at the little brier-scratched fist and kissed it.

"You're a silly little thing!" He laughed. Then he sobered. "But I can't never put words to it, Lila—like something threatenin' over me."

"Then whyn't you leave it, Ran?"

"Some day," he hesitated, his eyes still on the far-away peak. "Oh, shucks! I guess I am silly. Now I've got you—you an' me, we could lick anything, couldn't we?"

"I'd like to see it—the thing we couldn't lick," she said haughtily. Then she turned practical. "C'mon now; we've fooled long enough, Ran. I got the house to look after an' you got to fix the fish. C'mon."

She turned away with a peremptory gesture and, her skirts lifted high, moved with stately splashing strides to the bank. The young husband followed docilely. He had forgotten for a little the shadow. He remembered only his new happiness and Lila—Lila, who lifted all shadow, who amused him eternally, as now, moving before him, a small, blue-clad martinet guiding his clumsy feet on the paths of duty.

BUT Ran could not remember the time when the darkly lowering bulk of the mountain beneath which his forefathers had set their house had not oppressed him, when he had not secretly feared it. They were so close to it. Under it, really. Strange that his people should have stopped here—cleared their holding beneath the dark brow that lifted its bulk so arrogantly! Ran didn't know why they had stopped here, or any one else. There was no telling why the first Caleb Geer had set his ax to the timber that clothed this flank of Black Mountain, instead of going on with the rest of the folks to the settlement on the southern side.

Perhaps he had done it in a spirit of challenge—a spirit his sons had continued. But it was a hopeless challenge, Ran thought. You could never beat the mountain. Three generations of Geers before his father had tried it and had failed. They had won the wild land to a species of cultivation, had tilled and planted and built, but the big hilltop back of them overshadowed all. No human hand could alter its import or lift the shadow its presence brought. On winter days the sun set at two in the afternoon. Always from the southern windows it met one close at hand, a wall to shut the eye from further gaze—to cramp the mind's reach, turn one back in quest of a horizon.

Here, on the north side, the snow lay in rotting patches until late June, and though in the glare of August its dark growth offered refuge, there was, withal, a sense of loneliness, of curious, cold oppression.

At least, so young Ran had always thought. Even waking in the night as a child, he was aware of the great hill outside, brooding over him, towering above. Suppose it should ever crumple down on them—actually fall. And when a storm stirred it and its trees tossed their arms, it seemed to the boy as though it were a sleeping giant trembling with rage, threatening them.

"Why *did* our folks make their home here?" he had asked his mother once. But she didn't know.

She was a silent, hard-worked woman, given in her scant hours of release to sitting quietly with her eyes fastened on the river view, a narrow enough vista, caged by rival hills across the way. But even as a child Ran had noticed that she sat with her back to that biggest hill of all—sat looking "out beyond," a little hungry-eyed, he thought, as though she strained away from her physical setting.

Only once she gave him a hint.

"It's home, boy," she said, "and here we'll stay. Only—you don't have to look at it."

But that was it! You did have to look at it, drawn by a queer fascination that led the mind to it; or if you didn't look at all, you were aware of it just the same.

With his father Ran had never discussed it at all. One wouldn't with Elam Geer. The Geers were all silent men, but Elam outheroded Herod. Tall, gaunt, taciturn, an eternal pipe in mouth, he spoke only when driven by urgent necessity; but Ran secretly believed that he, too, felt the mountain, that it had laid its heavy hand upon him, creating its repressions. He was a stoic, Elam, wrapped in a spiritual vise. He had retreated so far into himself, had so governed and inhibited his impulses that he lived behind a deep barrier in a sort of cold defiance of material things.

Just as Ran believed that the turning of his mother's back was a spiritual concession to the big hill that overshadowed them, so he believed that the presence of the shelf connoted his father's response to its restraint.

The shelf figured at meal-time. It ran along the kitchen wall behind his father's chair; because of its jutting edge Elam sat a little forward, his head slightly craned.

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

And they came to the old stone-slide. Here and there a slim tree had gotten precarious foothold. "I b'lieve I could climb down easy." She laughed as she said it.

Whenever he straightened up he must touch against the ledge it offered. Yet the shelf had never been altered, or the position of Elam's chair.

"Why doesn't pa take the shelf down?" Ran had asked Henry Hargo once. "Or why don't he sit somewheres else?"

And Henry, a cheerful soul of forty, spat above the scythe he was sharpening.

"Cal'clate he stopped noticin' it long ago," Henry theorized; "cal'clate he wouldn't notice if 'twas changed. Your pa don't like change—new ways. His pa set there before him—cal'clate he likes the ole ways best; never can tell."

But Ran believed it was the mountain. It did things to you—shut you up in yourself. It made you feel little and futile and useless, as if you were matching yourself against something too big, something bound to win out in the end.

EVEN Henry Hargo, who had lived with them five years and on whom the mountain had had little or no effect, admitted this.

"'Tain't no place to fetch a woman to, Ran—I'll say that. Purty a hill as you want to see, spring and summers, sweetest smellin' Mayflowers anywheres round come April, an' the biggest vi'lets you ever know, but its more'n that. Thar was Win Geer's wife——"

Then Henry would wax reminiscent—as though that were needed. Everybody knew that Randall's uncle Winfield had brought a bride there the year before Randall was born and the bride had become—well, not "right," a little out of her head, and people said it was the loneliness and the high hill so close. "Still and all," Henry would conclude, "mebbe 'twant the hill at all. She was a homesick, pindling little thing come from Kansas. And they tell me the Kansas scenery ain't noways like this. You couldn't say it was mebbe jest Black Mountain's doin'. Mebbe 'twas all the hills and bein' lonesome, an' it might ha' been in the blood—like a fellow I know to Dry's Bend fetched a girl home for a wife, an' her folks an' all they kept it still she had these apoplectic fits. Well there he was; 'twas awful sad." And Henry would sigh and look sentimentally down the river valley.

He never failed to mention the fellow from Dry's Bend or to bring in some reference to matrimony; and this was natural, for ever since he had come to live with them Henry Hargo had been "courting"—courting a widow over at Eaganville, a lady uncertain, coy and hard to please, one gathered from the paces through which she put Henry. Yet he was a faithful and unfailing devotee.

Every Saturday evening he retired to his attic bedroom to make the *grande toilette*. This was composed of mysteries which included much splashing ablution, much sacred anointing of one's person with cloying musklike perfumes, not forgetting a heavy bear's-grease pomatum which Henry brushed carefully into his rather thin, threadlike hair, the donning of rather loud, ceremonial garments, of certain rings and pins and a brass-gold cable-chain across one's façade—in fine, a tender catering to great personal nicety. But these personal ministrations were not all of the game.

Henry had taken Ran into his confidence, had in the privacy of his room shown the boy the other minutiæ of his ritual, gifts one laid at the lady's shrine—a pink-celluloid brush-and-comb set in a sapphire-satin case, a rhinestone brooch, an ivoroid album, a fancy lace "throw."

So this was the way you got you a wife! By pretty things, and dressing up and scenting yourself and going over to sit in her house. Oh, other things, too! Henry had been kindly initiative. He led Ran vicariously through the preliminaries of courtship—had instructed him in certain expected ceremonies, privileges, that had given the boy a queer fillip of the heart.

Not but what old Henry Hargo was absurd—a laughing-stock, really, with his presents and his passion. Even his mother laughed at Henry—in a silent, wordless fashion. Old Henry Hargo— That was it. Love—love and courting and marrying! That was for youth. For a boy coming to young manhood to think about—he himself. It was his share of the human destiny, the allotted thing. And it waited for him.

Vaguely he realized it would make a great difference—about the mountain, especially. If one had some one near and close to one—some one who cared for one greatly—one could forget its shadow, forget the strange feeling of foreboding it awakened.

It seemed to Ran, the boy of fifteen, that it would be like bringing a torch into the dark house—to have a new life, a different spirit there. Then his heart would weight itself. Perhaps his father, Elam, had thought so too.

"No—I wouldn't say 'twas a good place to fetch a woman to, Ran. Women ain't got the stren'th of brain us men have——"

"My mother—" Then Ran would stop, for once a visiting cousin had told him "what a hand" his mother had been to laugh and jest as a girl.

"Wimmen is alike," Henry had declared that evening above his scythe. He had just sighed again about the man at Dry's Bend and had mentioned the widow at Eagansville, for whom he was buying a talking machine on the instalment plan. "Wimmen's minds is soft an' has got to be humored. If I was you, I'd never ask no girl to settle down here with me."

Ran's blood rose in defense a fleet second at the thrust. Four generations of forebears had dwelt here. It was a blow against home—the place his grandsires had cleared, had found good! Then a queer depression filled him.

He looked up at Henry Hargo—a gangling adolescent, sitting curled up, his arms clasped about his long, slim legs. He grinned and frowned together to hide his depression.

"Oh, well, shucks, Henry—what girl'd I get? There ain't anybody to the school, an' I wouldn't know any one to ask to come here. I don't believe any girl'd care to live here."

Yet he was mistaken, for two girls were to come, and both were to learn to love the place. The first of these was Nancy.

NANCY was the child of a girlhood friend of his mother's. Her people had died, and "Aunt Minnie" had sent for her to make her home here under Black Mountain.

For some days the youthful Ran had been filled with a faint sense of excitement, of something portentous impending. It was, he thought, the novelty of a newcomer's joining his family, the something strange that youth ever craves.

But it was more than this. He was dimly aware in some secret cave of his mind of the fact of Nancy's sex. Nancy was a young girl, a year his junior—the first young girl he had ever come into close contact with. He had the faintly thrilled expectation of one about to confront the unexplored, the tantalizingly attractive.

Yet the first glance at Nancy standing with her old "telescope" on the Fayette platform dispelled it all. There was no romance in Nancy. Plain she was, at the gawky age, with darkly freckled face, inconspicuous hair and a snub nose. Her clothes were ungracious to her, and when Ran, driving up with his rig, addressed her shyly, she turned an unbecoming brick-red.

He hardly talked to her driving home, nor did she speak. Yet he had realized shortly that Nancy was not timid. There was a certain repressed fire in her, a self-sufficiency that was sometimes startling. "Competent," his mother called her, and "old for her age"—she had the definition and the resources of a woman. But when she looked at Ran, a certain confusion seemed to fill her. When he spoke to her, the queer brick color sprang into her face, and Henry Hargo, noticing, waxed facetious.

"She's got a mash on you; that's plain, Ran. Now you got a girl right to your hand."

It filled Ran with indignant rage. Yet there was that in Nancy's eyes and manner that supported Henry.

And on the third Sunday, wearing her ungainly best starched lawn, with her hair plastered back and hanging in two whiplash braids, he had taken Nancy, at Henry's behest, up on the mountain. He had showed her the Indian Rock and the cold spring and the place they killed off the rattlesnakes in '92 and the valley view and the old quarry slide and the checker-board the farm made, and talked.

Stiffly, introductorily, Nancy talked, too. She told him all about herself, her parents' deaths, her shabby little village home, and how she liked history better than geography, and how her last teacher was so much crosser than the one before, and how she went to the fair at Briggsville once; that she loved to go out for Mayflowers and wintergreens, and didn't he hate regents' examinations and going to church?

And going down-hill, with a confiding, involuntary movement, she slipped a hand into his. But Ran, with his eyes on her plainness, and remembering Henry Hargo's jest, drew his hand away edgingly.

But it was clear Henry was right. Nancy was devoted to him. She ran dog-like to serve his bidding. She mended his socks and folded his clothing, and on gala occasions made little offerings—home-made candies, toothsome custards and special cakes—and on Christmas and birthdays added touches, colored picture-cards with festal, not to say sentimental mottoes. And remembering the instructions of Henry Hargo, Ran realized that, in a sense, he was embarked upon a courtship of sorts in an inverted form.

And Nancy herself realized it. For one evening—it was on his sixteenth birthday—when his mother said, "It's a good little sister you are to Ran, an' I hope he'll always be grateful," Nancy had looked up with a startled look, an air of hot, arrested speech on her lips, then, with a queer pallor on her, had slipped out of the room.

Afterward she came out to the pump, where Ran had gone alone.

"Ran," she said, with that touch of half-suppressed fire in her. "you needn't pay no 'tention to that. You know's well's I do I ain't your sister."

If only poor Nancy had not been so plain! There in that early-summer night, with the apple trees snowed over with fragrant lace, and a wise old moon to bewitch one, if Nancy had been just a little pretty! But she was not. Just plain and loving—and a little country dryad, clamoring the fact of her kinlessness at him, her candidacy. What else had she meant? She embarrassed, even troubled Ran, and he turned away with a little shake of his agate drinking-cup, watching the fillip of silver drops on the black grass.

Yet, after all, why shouldn't he grow to love and marry Nancy? Some day. She was so good, so steel-true, so eternally loving, so eminently suitable. As the slow months, the years, mounted and the boy reached eighteen, nineteen, he came presently, almost fatalistically, to believe that some day Nancy would have her wish. It was the mountain, of course, laying its curious inhibition upon one. Just as his father had passively accepted whatever he found in his path in life, so he, too— Unless some new, some saving element came along, something to shake one from the old routine, scatter old ideas.

IT WAS Elam, his father, who presently furnished this element. Elam was brought home dead from his work in the hay-field, dead of a creeping, hidden heart-affection, and Ran was master of Black Mountain farm.

He climbed up on the big hill after the funeral to think it over, sitting in his stiff, unwonted Sunday clothes, up in a cleft of the timber, where he could see the whole valley lying at his feet—sitting there silent through long hours, trying to reshape his ideas to this new and startling crisis. And there, as dusk gathered, he heard the foliage rustle and saw Nancy slipping up, ghostlike, to him. Her face was pale from crying; her eyes were dark and wide in the gloaming. She looked at him wistfully, hesitated, then sat down near him.

"I jus' came up," she said, faltering a little. "Ran, your ma says she's goin' over to Hallamville to stay a month with Addison's folks."

"Yes; I s'pose she will."

"Then I've got to go, too."

"Why, I d'know why. I don't see as you'd have to go."

"Well, you'd ought to see. I couldn't stay, could I? I'm—I'm twenty—a woman grown, Ran. And you a man. Folks would talk."

"Oh, I d'know. You've always been here. One o' the family."

"But I'm not family—" She hesitated, then clasped her hands tightly together. "Ran, your ma was sayin' to-day, now you're the head here, you'll likely be gettin' a wife before long."

"Jus' ma's talk."

"No, it ain't—you'll be doin' it."

"No," Ran said; "I haven't thought much about girls."

"But you will. It's nature." She nodded sagely. "So you'll be gettin' one, somebody to help you and look after you." She stopped, her pale face constricted, then spoke as though some inner agony urged her. "Oh, Ran—I'm hatin' her so—whoever she is! *I* want to take keer o' you. *I* want to look after you—I want to do fur you—always, Ran. Seems though there wasn't anything else I care about——"

"Oh, Nancy—" Ran began.

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

"Oh, it ain't any use, I guess. Any one with sense'd know that. Only—seems I can't stop feelin' that way. An' I'm always thinkin' perhaps if there was nobody else you'd ever care for—Ran, I'd do so faithfully fur you—seems I c'd die tryin' jus' to please you. Not that you care about me——"

"I *do* care about you, Nancy."

Ran stood up in acute suffering before her.

"But you couldn't care—*that* way." Her voice was rough and uneven.

"Well—not *that* way," he repeated uneasily.

He could not look at her for a moment. When he did, it was to see her standing still, white-faced, pathetic, but unbowed—the old, competent, self-effacing Nancy.

She drew a deep breath.

"Then that's that," she said. "I've always kep' a sort of fool notion— P'raps it's jus' as well, though. Anyhow, I can always be your friend, Ran—nothin'll stop me there."

She was so fine, so straightforward with her fiercely gallant boyish pride that Ran's throat caught.

"Must be somethin' wrong with me—way I'm made," he pondered, after she had left. " 'Taint as if there was anybody else. I'll likely never marry at all. I'll never *see* a woman I want to marry."

WITHIN three weeks he saw Lila Conover. His mother brought her home from Hallamville, and the moment he set eyes on her, Ran knew.

He came up the path and saw her in a pink frock among the rambler roses. A curious electric current flowed through his body. He thought suddenly of all the lovely things he had ever seen—of warmly tinted sunrises, patches of hill-bluets, of clear little brooks that ran out from hemlock thickets. There was a song he had heard once—a cheap popular air—down at Fayette: "You Are My Armful of Roses." The phrase flashed through his mind, but he only stood reddening, awkward, before her, stiffly touching her hand with his, conscious of his farm clothing, his bigness, his uncouthness.

When he entered the house, it was not the same. A blue haze had descended to veil the interior. His room had an unwonted, unfamiliar aspect. Even Black Mountain, seen from his window, receded, grew immaterial. He flung out of his everyday clothing passionately and, though it was only a week-day, got out his Sabbath finery, shaved and beautified himself. But it was not until he had lathered his face before his wobbly dressing-glass that a familiar note struck him.

Henry Hargo! Even as Henry, he had started down the old, old trail. In love—or about to be! About to woo a woman! A sudden gaiety of spirit, a tide of warmth overran him.

"It's come," he thought, putting on his best tie with meticulous care.

If he had had any doubt, there was Nancy to dispel it. It had happened on the second evening, when friends had come in. Lila had withdrawn a little from the kissing-games that had started—standing out with young-ladyish airs for something else. And Ran had come upon Nancy cutting up cake in the kitchen.

"If it was only *you*, she'd play it," she pronounced. "She likes you the best." Her face quivered as though some half-hidden emotion tore her. "An' why shouldn't she? You're the best one here—an' so's she." The words tore from her lips in a bitter honesty. "She's the prettiest girl we ever had round here—ain't it so, Ran? An' so sweet and kind-like."

If the plain girl had fought any battle with herself, it had been sharp and short—secret, too. She had swept them both under a protective wing.

"Ain't she sweet? Ain't she pretty, Ran?" she had insisted on another evening. "You know she is—but you gotta look out, boy! She won't be here long, an' there's the others."

The "others" were the young lads—Cyrus Hill and the Peake brothers and Cove Winchester—who came to the simple country fiestas. Lads who lived less lonely than he—lads with superior graces, more sophistication. Only for Lila's little hand touching his in the Virginia reel or saying good-night, only for her half-surprised smiles, he would have despaired utterly.

He did despair. How was he to ask her, to win her, to keep her here against his loneliness, his wistfulness? The time was so short. Yet it is never too short.

It was on the sixth day of Lila's stay—the day before she left. They had climbed together to one of Ran's favorite eyries on the hill. And Ran had told her of himself, slowly, in halting, unconsidered sentences. He had told her what he thought about the hill, too—something he had never shared with any one.

"Scairt o' this hill?" She had laughed, and she put out her brown little hand and patted the earth under it. "Why, it's only a hill—pile o' dirt an' stone!"

"I know. But still an' all,"—he laughed a little sheepishly—"I can't tell why. It was so when I was a little shaver. Always hated it, kind of. Kind of afraid it would do somethin' to hurt me. I think so yet." He laughed again.

"Why, what could it do, Ran?"

But Ran had lost his thread when he heard her use his name. There was something in her voice that sent a heady fire through his veins.

"I wouldn't be afraid with you!" he wanted to cry. But he got up silently instead, guiding her arm with a trembling hand as they moved down the path.

And they came to the old stone-slide. It was a bitten-out spot, where the ground had been sheared away as by a clumsy whittling Titan. Sharp stones and boulders jutted up, and at the bottom a great mass of storm-washed rubble had collected.

"That's a bad place"—Ran had held the screening foliage aside—"cruel bad to fall in."

"It looks pretty," Lila had demurred.

It was pretty, for the stones were overrun with vines and mosses, and here and there a slim tree had gotten precarious foothold.

"I b'lieve I could climb down easy." She laughed as she said it.

"Man's job," Ran denied her. "You'd never make it alone—got to have a good arm to help you."

"But if I *want* to go down over it——"

"Then I got to carry you is all."

"Carry me!" She threw back her head and laughed. "You never could. Why, I'm heavy as pig-iron."

For answer, Ran had picked her up and started down. Yet she had been right. For never had task been harder. Not because she was heavy, but she was so little and soft and warm against him. His heart rose to his throat; his foot faltered. And midway he rested against a great stone, looking up at her, flushed and rosy, all dappled with little gold sun-spots.

"Oh, Lila—oh, Lila!" he cried. "Mebbe, I won't never see you again!"

She laid her hand on his hair.

"I could come back, Ran——"

"*Would* you come back? To me? Lila—" He lost his words against her lips. He lost everything—the sun, the mountain, the green forest, the birds' songs.

Then she pulled free.

"Tol' you you couldn't carry me!" she taunted, with bright cheeks. "Tol' you I was heavy as pig-iron."

"Heavy's pig-iron an' sweet's honey." He laughed.

By these processes Ran came to the little brown tent on the Brindle River.

HE HAD said it would make all the difference in the world. And it did—

It was still there! It was back of it all, like something watchful, sinister, biding its time. It thrust upward through all the sunshine, the happiness and love that surrounded him like a dark figure lifted in warning. Or so it seemed to Ran. It was as though the very brightness in his life enhanced its bigness, its somberness. He seemed to realize it.

"It's 'cause we're so happy—*too* happy," he would think, above his plow, and he would take off his hat and stare up at the great hill, his mind troubled.

For he remembered that happiness had never lasted long here under the mountain. It had always been so. His mother must have been happy once—his grandmother. But the mountain had gotten them in the end. And so, deep in his mind, he believed the mountain would get him—and his Lila.

Oh, but better to take what the present offered! Better to drift, to forget old moods and prophecies. Perhaps Lila was right when she said the mountain could never hurt them, that their love for each other would be a shield against anything. He thought so, too. Only, he had not Lila's facile speech and ready chatter. He could only feel dumbly that she might be right.

He had not been mistaken in one thing. She was like a brave shining candle in the dim house. She lit it, spiritually, materially.

She brightened it with riches culled from mail-order houses—curtains with riotous roses on them, lamps with vivid shades, china overrun with gay posies, little feminine adornments. But more than all, she kept off the darkness by her gay spirit.

Even Nancy caught the infection of her mood. Nancy, who lived in the ell with his mother and was there every day, was Lila's silent adorer. Between them—these two women who loved him—the home was bright and, as winter drew on, Ran forgot Black Mountain.

But one night toward Christmas, when a sleety storm raged over its face and Lila had drawn her bright curtains close, and the stove glowed cherry-red, he thought of it again. Lila had laid out her sewing on the table and he picked up a bit of it.

"Dressin' more o' those church dolls?" he said. "You are the worst ever, Lila, to let folks put it onto you——"

The girl had sat looking into the fire; then she laughed a quick, nervous little laugh, recaptured the tiny sack he held.

"Oh—Ran—I want to be sure's sure—before I say—but I—well—I hope—I think— It ain't a church doll—it—it's *my* doll—Ran!"

It brought a curious lift to Ran's heart—a sense again of his oneness with life's responsibilities. He had held Lila very close in his arms while she told him more of her hopes. But later, parting the curtains, he had stared out at the dark mountain wall.

"Lila," he said, "come spring, I'm goin' to sell out here. This ain't the right place fur a little child to grow up—all shut-in-like, a-cloudy with his own thinkin'. I'll get us a new place where it's open and free an' you can see out a good ways——"

Lila had wound her arm through his and laughed.

"Why, Ran, if you ain't the silly! What's the poor ole hill goin' to do to you? What if it did make folks gloomy before? It won't hurt us. I *like* the ole hill, an' I want my child should grow up where his father did—an' all his folks. It's the home place. Why, Ran, ain't we provin' the hill can't hurt us? Ain't we?"

She pressed her vivid little face against him, but Ran shook his head.

"I'm scared it'll get us—change things," he said. "Come spring——"

But "come spring" there were so many other things to think of. There was Lila to be cherished with such care—going away was not to be thought of. And, as though to belie its name, Black Mountain had never been lovelier, touched with young greenery.

On the day Cove Winchester drove over to get Ran the whole place was sweet with growing flowers. Ran was to do jury duty at Hallamville—a week's service—and Nancy and Lila were out on the porch to see him off.

The little wife clung to Ran at the last. But it wasn't to be for long, he promised. Only a few days—and Nancy would be there. At the bend of the road Ran saw them still standing, watching him. Then behind them, above the house, his eye caught the old barrier. "First come; last go," he thought, looking at it. "A person can't forget you anywhere. I don't trust you—oh, I don't trust you!"

IT WAS late on the afternoon of the third day. It was unduly hot; the case, a boundary claim, dragged interminably. Ran saw a man come in, speak to the doorkeeper, edge by and whisper to the foreman. There was some little agitation, buzzing whispers—glances his way. At once a curious apprehension filled him. Heads turned his way, and when the foreman bent to him, he got out of his seat, a black mist before his eyes.

A telephone message had come in—from the hospital at Fayette. Juryman Randall Geer would be excused—he was wanted over at Fayette. There was sickness—his wife. It took hands and bracing, friendly words to get Ran out of the room.

He heard the judge's words behind him in dismissal for the day—the tap of the gavel as in a dream.

Some one helped him find his hat. There was a little car placed at his disposal. White and stony, his heart filled by suspense and fear, Randall climbed up beside the driver. So Lila's hour had tolled for her unexpectedly, and they had taken her away—to Fayette—to the hospital! Unthinkable! He was aware of the driver's droning voice—Lin Carson, comforting him out of his own domestic experiences. He was the father of five, Lin Carson was, and wise, as he said, and used to these crises.

But Randall did not heed him. He sat hunched forward, blind to the sweeping scenery, hearing only the rattle and roar of the engine.

Dusk had fallen when they reached Fayette—the grounds of St. Joseph's Hospital. Lights had come out in the town, and the windows in the long building were golden parallelograms against the night. There were voices about—an opened doorway with a lighted hall.

He saw two men come out—doctors! Saw them get into a car and drive away. Ran stumbled up to the doorway, touched the bell.

Across the bar of lighted hall he saw a woman coming. A woman in a nun's habiliments—a cloistral, peaceful figure in sweeping black and snowy linen. There was a faint whispering of beads, a jingling of the little keys she carried.

"Randall Geer? Mr. Randall Geer—yes—you are expected. In here, please."

And Ran, stumbling after her, crossed the hall to a long narrow parlor. He saw formal Gothic chairs—a bare table, a blur of electric light—and at one end a great Christ on a black crucifix. Then he heard his name out of the mist and saw Nancy. She was beside him, holding his hands.

"Lila!" he faltered. "O my God, how is it, Nance? Is she awful bad? I didn't expect—so soon——"

"Oh, Ran," she said brokenly, " 'twan't that! Not what you looked for. Lila fell. This afternoon—in the woods."

"The woods," he repeated stupidly.

"She went to gather flowers—trilliums to fix the house. We didn't find her right off. Not for a while afterward. I had Ed Low fetch Dr. Watts from town, an' he said she must come here. He 'phoned the ambulance to Halesville, and the Nealls drove Lila over. It's her back. She's hurted bad."

There was a swift spasm through Ran's body.

"I—I don't see"—he groped stupidly for words—"in the woods—gettin' flowers? But where?"

But he knew—in his heart.

"It was the ole stone-slide!" Nancy cried. "She missed her footin'—up on the mountain."

So he had been right. The mountain had got him after all!

Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922

It was a long night.

They had Lila on the operating-table. The issue was doubtful—only one thing clear—that Lila's fondest hope was ended. From time to time a nursing sister slipped in, velvet-shod, to give him tidings. But Ran hardly heeded. He sat opposite Nancy, tense and silent—staring into vacancy.

He was conscious of but one thing: Lila, his little Lila—like a broken lily, somewhere in that house of pain, removed from his love. Across from him sat Nancy, vigilant, homely in dress, her big eyes burning in her pale face. It was good to have Nancy there—like a good staff to lean upon. Without her he would have gone down.

With the long hours the man and woman did not move — sitting like figures in a painting, in the high-backed Gothic chairs, raw contrasts in their *gauche* dress to the sophistication of these time-worn symbols of an older world.

Once, after many hours, a single cry reached them—a long-drawn, piercing cry of agony from some one on the rack in those dim farther halls, and Ran started out of his chair, sweating, his hands clenched. He saw only one thing—the Christ with His outstretched arms up on the wall at the room's end. He went up and stopped under it.

"O Christ," he cried, "you that knowed suffering—an' dyin' by inches—stand by the little girl——"

But, after all, he wasn't sure he had really uttered the words aloud. He only knew that Nancy came and led him back to his chair. Gray dawn had painted out the night when a nurse came in for the last time. The doctors could do no more now—they must wait. Go away to wait, and return later.

Into the coming day Nancy led him, stumbling, to a shabby hostelry.

Ran stared about the room in which he must wait, at the scuffed Windsor chairs, the green oilcloth table, with its dusty ink-bottles and drabbled blotters. Suddenly he sank down, his head on his arms, and cried with long-drawn, wretched, heart-broken sobs.

IT WAS curious, but the mountain had changed for Ran. He no longer feared it. It was like having met a dread adversary, having been beaten—and left broken, lying in its whirlwind trail. Having done its worst, it had no longer power to hurt.

Sometimes through the long months when Lila lay in the Fayette hospital and Ran moved about his farm-tasks with his heart cold and numb, he was aware of this.

"You can't hurt me no more," he would think in his heart, and for the first time his eyes would trail, cold and appraising, over the hill contour. The bogy of his life—his boyhood obsession—it had lost all terror now, and lifted the weight it had brought to him.

"You couldn't do no worse than you've done," he would say. "You killed my child—an' nigh to killed my girl. You're done."

Indeed, it seemed that no worse could have befallen. Hardly even death! For they were not sure that Lila would ever walk—could ever be other than the little wan, white-faced thing he visited every week at Fayette, with the curious steel frame about her—the little uncomplaining creature whose strangely big eyes brightened at his coming.

"It was my own foolishness, Ran. I shouldn't ha' done it, and for once 'twasn't your ole mountain's fault. Could ha' been any other hill."

And this was all true. But to Ran the accident carried its own significance. Through it—through the sacrifice of Lila's sweet body—he had come definitely to the end of one part of life; the mountain's teeth had been drawn. It would threaten him never again. It was, as he said, just a hill—no different from the rest.

Indeed, in his remote, detached mood, he fell to climbing it oftener than he had ever done—looking down at his farm-land holding in reverie. It lay a peaceful agricultural pattern at his feet, and deeply there stirred in him some queer fiber of sympathy with those first Geers who had planted it for him, who had called it good. Perhaps they, like an earlier migratory people, had heard a voice speaking in their ear:

"*But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven.*"

Sometimes as he sat thus, looking down at his home, he felt an odd kinship with that first ancestor of his—that Caleb Geer. Could it be that that Caleb Geer had read something into Black Mountain he himself had never realized; that when he lifted his face to it, morning or evening, or at midday, resting from his task, he had found something in it, some message his sons had failed to find—something he, Randall, had never supposed existed? Was it there for him to read also? And if so, what was it? What had it meant to Caleb Geer—to have that great hill at his back?

Perhaps if a new crisis had not threatened Ran, he might not so speedily have found that answer.

His weeks of doubt, of waiting, of deep suffering and, finally, dull resignation, had changed him much. He was grown gaunt and lean of cheek, with shoulders less erect, with something stricken in his eyes.

YET there came a day when the first spring sun flushed the hills, when there came sharply to his consciousness, like a whiff of acrid bitterness in the nostrils, the knowledge that the end was not yet. Something more was to be demanded of him, something whose shadow still encompassed him—a shadow he dared not pierce by questioning. Not yet.

It came upon him one day sitting by Lila's bed in the hospital, when he had ventured some faint, half-hearted prophecy for the summer months. She had turned her head sharply, burying it in her pillow with a tiny sob. It was so abrupt, so swift, that Ran sat perfectly still, not speaking. And a strange fear smote his heart, leaving it ice.

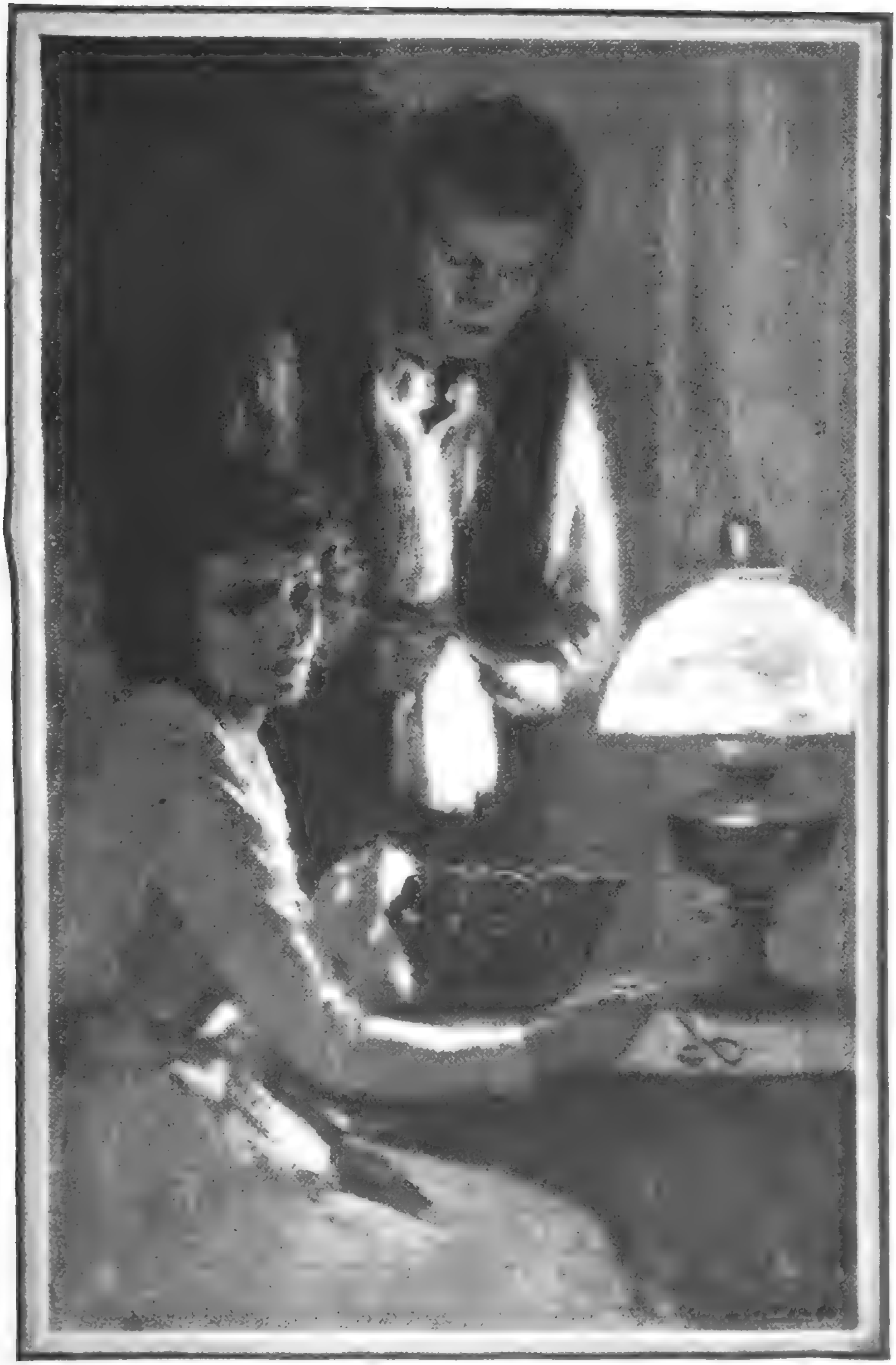
"You're not to talk about—the summer, Ran," she had said. Why had she said that?

In a few minutes she had turned back to him, had tried to be bright and interested, but he had caught the glint of tears in her eyes.

"Don't min' me, Ran," she had begged. "I got as many notions's I used to have."

"What is it, sweetheart—what's troublin' you?" he had asked. And she had laughed him off.

He tried to believe there was nothing, but there were other things. Evasions he caught in the doctor's, the nurse's eyes, the pondering, brooding air Nancy wore as she moved through the house. There was a mystery he alone could not share. He felt it vaguely, sensitively—caught it in



"Dressin' more o' those church dolls?" he said. "You are the worst ever, Lila, to let folks put it onto you——"

a dozen ways—yet dared not speak—ask outright.

Once he had mentioned buying a new chair for Lila against her home-coming, and Nancy, to whom he spoke, had put down her dish-towel abruptly and squarely turned her back upon him.

"I—I'd wait," she had murmured.

Once or twice leaving St. Joseph's, Ran had gone to the doctor's office to ask, to demand; yet always he had stopped outside. For he believed he knew! What need had he to ask? In the watches of the night he faced it fully. Lila was not going to live! Her span had been measured. And she—these others—would not have him know. It was a secret she would keep from him—a game of make-believe she would play against him. And if he would make her happy, he must play it out with her. The agony it brought was crushing. He could not bear it, he thought; he could not stand up under it.

AND so, one night, he stumbled on the message Black Mountain had offered Caleb Geer. He looked up at it in his agony and blind misery and saw it as it really was—a mass of impregnable fixity, stern and arrogant; but of uninvaded strength. It was a bulwark against the world beyond, but also a shield to the spirit. It lifted its great bulk, not in sinister portent but like a pointing hand, urging the eye upward, inviting it to surmount its peak, to the contemplation of God.

A little thrilled shiver ran through Randall. He felt strange filaments stirring within him—age-old phrases uttered by other hill-men:

"*In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also,*" and "*I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help.*"

All this had been here for him to find where he had found only fear before. He spoke to the mountain now, not as to a foe but as to a friend.

"I must be like you," he thought, "strong—strong to endure."

But the day of his endurance was not long.

He was cutting out brush in an upper pasture when he looked down and saw a shining insectlike thing flying over the ribbonlike mountain trails. He knew it. It was the Fayette hospital ambulance. And for a moment his secret belief blackened the sun out of his eyes, set him stupidly wetting his lips.

What did it mean? Had they come to summon him? A hundred fears fought in him as he moved blindly down the pasture.

He reached the farmyard as the big car swung in. He saw a nurse, blue-caped, open a rear door, leap down and turn with helping hand.

Then he could not believe what he saw.

For he saw Lila coming to meet him—running with little jerky steps, her arms outstretched. Little and white and frail. But whole. His old Lila!

There were tears streaming down her cheeks, but for the life of him Ran could not move. She had to come to him and put her arms about his neck.

"Oh, Ran," she sobbed, "it's just a surprise! I kept it for you—you see, I was so 'fraid it wouldn't come true. All of six weeks I've been doin' it—practisin' walkin'. I made 'em keep still, so's I could come back to you an' surprise you. An' here I am. Sound's ever, Ran. Good as gold—all ready to begin over——"

But still Ran was too dazed to move; a trembling seized him from head to foot. All his past agony rushed up like a river to break the dam of his reserve. He swayed in her arms, and to divert him she turned suddenly, saucily, and shook her fist at the mountain above.

"An' there you are, you ole hill! I've come back to you, too. And don't you let me catch you cuttin' any capers to worry my Ran. I tol' you I'd take the tuck out of you, an' I did it—and now I'm back and I'll protec' my boy——"

But here Ran laid gentle fingers on her lips.

"Oh, Lila, that's all gone! I never understood the mountain right. But I know now. We've made friends—the hill an' me——"

He could not go on—his old inarticulateness seized him; his heart was too full. But it seemed to him that the great peak stared down not unfriendlily. It seemed, indeed, as though he read across its face a promise of calmer, happier seasons—a portent of fuller, richer years embroidered against the background of its unfailing strength.

### *A Mystery Serial—The Strange Story of a Girl*

# SWALLOWED UP

### *Held, Ostensibly as a Patient, in a Hospital for the Insane, with Every Hand Turned Against Her, There Seemed No Way Out. But There Was a Way—and a Perilous One*

## By Mrs. Wilson Woodrow

Illustrations by R. K. Ryland

*Begin this serial with any instalment. The story is here up to this issue.*

AN ATTENDANT making his leisurely rounds paused near the rustic bench on which Kelsey and the girl were sitting and speculatively measured the distance between them and the wall with his eyes.

Kelsey recognized him as one of the men who had hindered him when he tossed his luggage over the gate and attempted to climb after it, and, meeting that heavy, suspicious glance, lifted his brows and drooped his mouth, simulating a bored and weary resignation which was further borne out by his inert, lounging attitude.

The attendant, remembering a painful bruise or so sustained in their brief but animated encounter, twinkled his small eyes, grinned and walked on, deriving a malicious pleasure from ignoring what he took to be Kelsey's S.O.S. call for relief.

The girl paid no attention to either of them. Her head bent over the note-book, she covered its pages with a racing pencil, apparently oblivious to everything about her.

While the guard was still within ear-shot, however, Kelsey took no chances. He opened his book and came upon the fragment of newspaper the wind had blown to him just before the beginning of his strange encounter with this girl. "Strange"—what a word for a situation that baffled him by its mystery and its sinister possibilities!

Here he was, George Kelsey, M. D., lately a staff physician under Dr. Bristow, the famous alienist, in a private lunatic asylum that was called a sanatorium. Yet he was under restraint as a patient, because he had blundered upon facts that made him suspect Bristow of being a criminal, and had determined to resign and go away. Bristow had accepted his resignation; but he had been forcibly prevented from going, and was now a prisoner because, presumably, Bristow thought he would expose him should he be left free!

And here was this girl who was, his medical knowledge told him, as sane as he was himself, but pretended, for some mysterious reason of her own, to be demented, and sought an opportunity to talk with him, unobserved. "Strange"—a mild word!

The lurid paragraphs of the old newspaper caught his eye. Hope Ranger, daughter of Loring Ranger, the millionaire—she had vanished, been literally swallowed up. She had lunched at the Plaza Hotel in New York. Within an hour all trace of her had been lost. The police knew, it seemed, how she had not disappeared; they had no clue as to how she had. She had stopped at a shop for a sundae; nothing more had been seen or heard of her.

Again, as he saw the photographs in the paper, memory stirred in him. They looked like some one he knew—yes; Miss Copley, the head nurse. But then—yes; at first—just now—he had mistaken the girl beside him for Miss Copley, too. They looked enough alike to be sisters. Queer things, these resemblances! He glanced at the girl. *Was* she sane? Or would some dementia soon show itself?

"He's gone," murmured Kelsey, when the guard had moved out of ear-shot. "Now tell me."

She did not answer at once, and he had enough intuition to grasp that she was wavering between doubt and faith. She had turned to him naturally, instinctively; but now she was frightened. Bristow's conversation with him had raised a question in her mind. She was no longer sure that he was a friend and ally, and until he had convinced her she hesitated to give him her confidence.

THIS unreadiness to trust him was not flattering to his self-esteem, but it was certainly another proof of her sanity—the insane are usually only too ready to discuss the subject of their aberrations. It was proof, too, that she was, or felt she was, running a considerable risk in disclosing herself as a mentally normal person; and naturally his curiosity was stirred to learn why a woman in that place was voluntarily assuming the rôle of a "bug."

Yet, oddly, this desire to fathom the puzzle she presented was subordinate, he realized, to an eagerness to win her belief in himself. A sense of vast compassion filled him as he looked at her. Through her pallor and the shadows that lay about her haunting eyes he could vision the radiance and bloom so lately vanished. Even now there was no suggestion of invalidism about her.

The sunlight flickered in golden disks over her dark hair and her cheek like the petal of a magnolia flower. But, more than her beauty, the appeal of her charm and spirit moved him. Filaments as tenuous and ethereal as those of a spider's web drew him to her with the impulses of sympathy and protection.

"It's all rather confusing to me," she said at last, evidently still hesitating to commit herself. "Why I am at this place, I mean, and the reason for keeping me here and all. And I would like to get things clear. Perhaps it would help if you would tell me first what you are doing here."

Balked, he mentally applauded her adroitness. She had met his demand for explanations by deftly turning the tables on him.

"Very well," he smiled quizzically; "since you prefer it that way. But if I stop short at any time, you'll understand that it's because some one is about.

"I won't go into my first meeting with Bristow and all that." He talked rapidly and in short sentences, moving his lips as little as possible. "I came here as assistant physician, and liked it. The place is splendidly run and up to date—an invaluable experience for me, for a little while, anyway. Then, one day—no need going into details now—I overheard a conversation between Bristow and a visitor. I didn't listen intentionally, but I was in such a position that I couldn't help it. This visitor was describing the theft of a lot of valuable jewels and consulting Bristow about the best method of disposing of them. And Bristow made no bones about giving his assistance — on a fifty-fifty basis. He laid out a whole scheme, told the fellow just what to do, giving the names of persons and places—" He paused, as if expecting her to question his statement.

"It doesn't surprise me a bit," she said, drawing in her breath sharply.

"No? Well, I was so flabbergasted that I simply stood there like a tree, rooted. I couldn't believe my ears. My brain seemed numb.

"Bristow discovered me, of course. He cut the conversation short and sent the man away. He never turned a hair. I'll say this for him: He's great in an emergency. But his eyes—they went through me like a diamond drill."

A responsive shiver contracted her shoulders.

"There was no use acting as if I hadn't taken it all in," Kelsey resumed, "and I didn't hesitate to express myself. I was leaving at once, I told him—didn't care to be associated with a bunch of crooks. Bristow didn't bluster any—just smiled in that maddening, superior way of his and, when I finished, condescended to explain. He had been humoring a lunatic, he said; my experience should have taught me the necessity of sometimes doing that. The story of the stolen jewels was pure dementia, but interesting as an example of unusual coherence. He had been trying to draw the patient out by pretending to play confederate, had, in fact, rather enjoyed exercising his ingenuity at it. If a little amusement was to be extracted now and then from the dreary recital of delusions one had to listen to, why not take it?

"He made the thing plausible enough, but it didn't sink in as he expected. I'd heard the two of them talk. There wasn't any make-believe about it; they were right down to business. Actual names and addresses were given and written down. And the alleged patient was allowed to depart, free.

"So I stood my ground, and bluntly told him that I didn't consider the circumstances open to misinterpretation.

"Bristow was thinking hard by this time. 'It's no use continuing such a discussion,' he said shortly. 'When you have had a chance to come to your senses and realize the absurdity of these suspicions, I shall expect an apology.'

" 'Not from me,' I said. 'I am leaving as soon as I can pack my things.'

"He began tapping on the arm of his chair, but he was as cool as ever. 'It looks as if your usefulness here is over,' he agreed. 'I regret it. You would have been a valuable man——' "

"Speak a little lower," she cautioned.

"Thanks; I forgot for the moment. Well, I left him then and went up to my room. I've told you how I attempted to get away and failed. After that, I tried to get to Bristow again, but he wouldn't see me. So I turned to Morton."

"MORTON?" she repeated interrogatively.

"Yes; the other house physician. He's a quiet, non-committal sort of fellow. I didn't go into the whole thing with him; just told him I'd had a falling-out with Bristow and resigned, but that when I attempted to leave the place, I'd been prevented.

"He didn't show any surprise. He'd been primed. Just listened, and said now and then, 'I'm sorry,' or, 'Too bad.' I didn't get his attitude at the time. My idea then was that he was too keen on his job to take sides. But I gained a clearer light on him when I finally talked to Bristow.

"He was all ready for me, and didn't waste any time in laying his cards on the table.

" 'It's for your own sake that I have taken these restrictive measures,' he said in his best professional manner. 'I'm not easily fooled, yet I confess I had no suspicions of you. But your violent outbreak and the persistent way you have clung to your delusions leave only one course open to me. Let us be reasonable, Kelsey. Whatever opinions you hold concerning my nefarious activities'—he smiled as if he thought that supremely amusing—'you will at least concede my standing and experience as a physician. So I urge you to regard me simply in that light and give me your confidence. Do you remember any great shock or accident in your life?'

"I saw where he was heading, and boiled over.

" 'No shock like finding you a scoundrel and a thief!' I jumped up from my chair. 'Of course I see your game, Doctor. I know too much for my health, and therefore you are prescribing a rest for me here under your eye.'

"He looked at me without moving a muscle, patient still, but a little stern.

" 'In the last few days,' he said, 'I've gathered considerable information about your past life. You are, I find, an Australian, an actor born in Melbourne. Your name is not Kelsey but Haworth—James Haworth.'

"That was a bit too thick, and I told him so. The devil listened to me quietly, never altering his expression. He was the grave, kind medical adviser.

" 'You say, "What rot!" and say it quite seriously,' he came back at me, 'for yours is a case of dual personality. You started life as a young physician. Something occurred—a shock of some sort. Your secondary personality asserted itself, and you became an actor. This continued for a time, and then the doctor-personality reasserted itself and you came to this country. In neither of these states is there any remembrance of the other. There may eventually occur—and I think I can help you in such a crisis—a struggle between the two personalities, and it will then devolve upon you to decide which one you wish to retain, definitely putting the other away. In the mean time, I feel it my duty to keep you under observation.' "

While he talked, Kelsey was aware that the girl was following his narrative with an almost feverish intentness, and he wondered again at her self-control, for she wrote steadily without pause, never lifting her eyes from the note-book, never by the slightest inadvertence of movement or expression giving to an unseen observer a hint that she was conscious of her neighbor's presence.

"You may not understand this about dual personalities," he interrupted himself to say; "but there are such cases, and it was uncommonly clever of Bristow to tag me with that type of psychic disorder. For although I might appear perfectly all right, my best friends would hesitate to question his expert verdict on a condition so outside their ordinary experience, and would agree that a hospital was a proper place for me."

"I see," she murmured. "Go on, please—quickly. Some one may come before you finish."

"Well, of course I told him that he couldn't put anything of the kind across. There were too many people in Chicago who remembered me from babyhood, not to speak of my college years.

"It didn't feaze him. He advised me to keep cool and accept the situation gracefully. Insubordination would only make it harder for me. He absolutely refused to take the responsibility of permitting me at large.

"High-handed—wasn't it?—and yet fairly safe. I had talked pretty freely to him before our row, and he knew that I had no close relatives to bother about me, and my friends would take it for granted I'd moved on somewhere and that they would hear from me when I got ready.

"There—that's my story. Do you—are you satisfied that I am neither crazy nor a tool of Bristow's?" He held his breath while he waited for her answer.

"Yes"—there were no reservations in her voice now—"I do trust you. I did from the first, but I had to be sure. Oh, if you knew what it means to me to find some one in this place on whom I can rely!"

The relief, the fervor in her tone stung him. He had not regretted the stand he had taken with Bristow even in the grip of the consequences it entailed. But now he saw that if he had followed a more temperate, politic course, he might still be a house physician and in a position to be of real service to her.

"I've been a hot-headed fool." He was moodily abject in his self-condemnation. "I should have pretended to believe Bristow's explanation of his dealings with that crook. Then I wouldn't be caught here like a rat in a trap. I would be able to help you."

He saw a smile—the first he had seen on her face—dent her cheek.

"I think I like you better that you didn't," she whispered. "And you can help me as it is. You will get away, I am sure. You must get away." Her voice was still low but passionately vehement. "You must take a message from me. I will——"

"Careful!" he warned quickly. "Miss Copley has come out and is looking for you." He slouched back on the bench, more bored and gloomily abstracted than ever.

The nurse crossed the lawn swiftly, her face darkening as she caught sight of the two on the rustic seat.

"Verna!" she called. "Verna!" There was an anxiety bordering on panic in her harsh, unmodulated voice.

The girl did not respond at once. Then she started and looked about her, as if she had just returned from a far country and the present surroundings were unfamiliar. But at another "Verna!" she rose obediently and held out the note-book and pencil.

"Look!" she said. "See all I've written. He"—with a gesture toward Kelsey—"gave me the book and pencil."

"How nice!" The nurse was composed again. "Now, give them back to him, dear, and come in the house. I have a hat I want you to try on."

JUAREZ CHARLIE was beginning to feel oppressed and uneasy. Three days had passed since the hat was taken out of Ranger's car, and there had been no succeeding developments. Again and again he had explored the straggling neighborhood where he lived, searching each fence-post and hoarding for another of those cabalistic communications, but without result.

On the fourth morning as, after another fruitless hunt, he brought out the motorcycle, which Ranger had insisted on his accepting in order to facilitate his movements, and prepared to start for town, he had the air of a discredited prophet who has lost honor even with himself.

Not that he had any misgivings on his own part. He was sure that, sooner or later, the Combine would show its hand. To achieve its ends, it had to follow definite platted lines. But Ranger was a more uncertain quantity. He had no fixed trajectory. He could zigzag; and with his patience growing thinner every hour or under the influence of ill-advised friends, was apt to do so. Ranger was the sort of man who, if he did not see the wheels going round fast enough, always itched to run the engine himself. Another negative report might start him off on a tangent that would wreck all chances of recovering the missing girl.

Responsibility and Charlie had always been at odds; and now it seemed to him as if all the cares he had so sedulously sidestepped had piled themselves in an accumulated load upon his shoulders. His light spirit sagged under the burden.

LIKE a schoolboy bringing home an unfavorable report and lagging on the way, he trundled slowly through the maze of Brooklyn's streets and found frequent excuse to stop and tinker with his motor. When he finally crossed the river and was pointing up-town, he was a little startled to notice by a street-clock he passed that it was twenty minutes after one.

Perhaps, came the suggestion, Loring might have left the factory—it was not uncommon for him to go home early these days in order to be with his wife—and thus Charlie would be spared that dejected shake of the head, that weary sigh of deferred hope which he knew would greet his lack of news. On the chance of this reprieve, he notched up his pace and shifted to a more direct course.

But he was out of luck. As he drew up before the entrance, the outer guard, to whom he was now a familiar figure, waved him along toward the office with the jocular announcement that the boss had been just on the point of sending out a general alarm for him.

Glumly he walked up the corridor and opened the office door, then stopped short on the threshold and began awkwardly to back away.

Inside, Ranger and Eustace Higby, the attorney, were in earnest discussion over a letter which Higby held in his hand, while over by the window stood Mrs. Ranger, intently studying a photograph, moving it to catch the most favorable light, hungrily seeking in it more than the camera revealed—some clue in the flat, featureless background, some message in the pictured eyes which she alone could divine and translate. The tears were rolling down her cheeks, but on her lips was a tremulous, ecstatic smile.

The slight noise made by Charlie's intrusion and his mumbled apologies for blundering into a family group roused the three from their preoccupation, and Ranger, stepping quickly over, caught the retreating Juarez by the arm and drew him into the room.

"It's come, Charlie!" His eyes were shining. "Just as you said it would, old boy! A photograph and the demand for money. Found them on my desk when we came back from lunch." In his excitement he kept on pumping Charlie's arm up and down and patting him on the shoulder. "You called the turn—not a doubt of it! It's Hope beyond a shadow of question. She's alive, man—alive and well! Look! You can see for yourself."

He pulled Charlie across the room to his wife.

"Mary Lou, this is Charlie."

She dragged her gaze from the snap-shot and held it up for him to see.

"It's the hat all right." He tried to throw some enthusiasm into his voice; but this atmosphere of jubilation left him feeling dry and meager. It was, as he told himself, too darned premature. Charlie had his superstitions.

"Yes; and it's Hope, too," Ranger declared. "We couldn't be fooled on that point."

"Oh, yes; it is certainly Hope." Mrs. Ranger's voice trembled with emotion. "How can we ever thank you, Mr. ——" She hesitated, flushing faintly. She felt that she ought to know his name, and yet she could not remember ever having heard her husband use it. She compromised hastily on, "Mr. Juarez."

Charlie grinned. On the whole, her choice rather appealed to him. That "Mr. Juarez" had a wealthy, impressive sound. It smacked of Cuban sugar or Mexican oil-wells or something of the sort. He rose to it, slightly inflating his chest. He liked Mrs. Ranger.

"I'm mighty glad to have the chance of meeting you, too, Mr. Juarez." Higby held out his hand. "You've been the sole person to throw any light on the puzzle."

Charlie shook off the praise with a twist of his shoulder.

"It's no more than any snub-nosed messenger-boy could have done if he knew the hobo language. Besides, it's too soon to be handing out any *Croix de Guerre*. We've got a long, rocky road before us."

"But we've got a start on it." Ranger refused to be dashed. "Something definite to go on, instead of the blank, horrible uncertainty."

Charlie's glance flicked over the three sanguine faces turned toward him. He had tried to make Ranger understand in advance how little any communication from these tricksters meant as a guaranty of Hope's safe return; but evidently he might have saved his breath. The mere certainty that the girl was still living had brought such a mercurial rebound from their previous despondency and suspense that none of them could see anything but clear sailing ahead.

IN RANGER the change was startling. The furrows in his face seemed miraculously ironed out; his voice was fuller, stronger; his shoulders were thrown back with something of his old robust assurance. And his wife's gaze was glowing, uplifted. Even the spare, self-contained lawyer showed his relief from the tension.

He was no crape-hanger, Charlie told himself; yet what real encouragement could he offer? He shuffled his feet in embarrassment, and bending over the photograph again, pretended to study it closely.

"It's the hat, all right," he repeated.

"That absurd hat!" Mrs. Ranger smiled deprecatingly. "And yet you were right about it, Mr. Juarez. It does prove conclusively that the picture was taken within a day or two, doesn't it?" She hung over his shoulder as if she could not bear the likeness from her sight. "And see; she is looking well, not at all as if she were ill treated or—or deprived of anything. She is actually laughing. Laughing! How can she, when she must know what we have suffered?"

"They snapped her when she wasn't expecting it, I guess," Charlie explained; "and she's laughing at herself in that sky-piece. Who wouldn't? You don't want to think anything of that, ma'am."

"Oh, I don't! I don't! I am only too rejoiced to know that it is she. Hope! Hope!" She crooned the name. "And it will be only a little while now until she is home in our arms. You believe that, don't you, Mr. Juarez?"

"Sure!" Charlie tried to throw a full, round note of conviction into his voice, and didn't quite succeed. To his relief, Ranger reminded him just then that he had not yet read the letter.

He took it, ran over it perfunctorily, and laid it back on the desk without comment.

"Well, what do you think?" Ranger was growing a little impatient at this indirectness.

Charlie cocked his eye at the ceiling, and made an heroic attempt to look thoughtful.

"Seems fairly plain," he said. "They say if you leave one hundred thousand dollars in Liberty Bonds under a railroad crossing on the Lone Hill Road at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon, your daughter will be returned; and they warn you that if you fail, or try to double-cross them in any way, you'll never see her again. That's about all there is to it, so far as I can see."

"I know. I know. But it's struck me that something might be gleaned from it beyond the mere message. It's typewritten and on plain paper; but an expert might find a clue in the typing, or from a watermark or something of the kind."

"Maybe," Charlie agreed uninterestedly. He knew the Combine would never be caught in any such puerile lapses.

But the suggestion brought an agitated protest from Mrs. Ranger.

"No! No!" she cried. "I will not listen to it, Loring. I will not allow any risks to be taken. Their conditions must be met to the letter. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Juarez?"

Charlie evaded. He was no detective, he muttered. He was only too glad to give any aid he could, but it was up to Loring and herself to decide the course that should be followed.

Higby, more astute than the others, realized that he was not going to be led into expressing his real opinion in the presence of Mrs. Ranger, and tactfully succeeded in getting her to leave with him.

As the door closed behind them, Charlie sank into a chair and busied himself in rolling a succession of cigarettes.

"Perhaps a finger-print man could help us." Ranger was still dwelling on his theme. "That letter and the photograph must have been handled by the person who put them in the envelope, and it might be——"

At last Charlie could unleash himself.

"For heaven's sake, Lorry, come down to the solid old earth and stop floating round in the clouds like a balloon! How do you expect me to think, while you are shooting that 'dear Watson' hokum at me. We've got to plan something—and plan it quick."

"Just what I was trying to do"—defensively. "I'm excited, of course. This news means everything to us. Hope's alive! She's in the same world we are! It's like lifting a weight of tons from us. But I'm not forgetting the anguish those scoundrels have caused us, and, by God, they'll pay for it! This message means they're beginning to get scared, and——"

Charlie leaned forward.

"Good Lord, Lorry!" There was actual entreaty in his voice. "Won't you understand? Won't you realize what we are up against? You talk about making those people pay, and sit here weaving kindergarten schemes to trap them; and all the time they've got you sewed up tighter than a drum. They've got your daughter in their hands, and they tell you plainly that if you don't come across with a hundred grand by to-morrow—and play square with them, too—you'll never see her again. What are you going to do about that?"

Ranger flinched for a moment before this vigorous presentation, but he rallied.

"Why, if I can't do anything else, I'll deposit the bonds as directed, and then have enough men close at hand to nab whoever comes after them."

"And you expect 'em to walk unsuspectingly right into your bunch of nabbers? Lorry! Lorry! A kidnaper from the East Side would know better than to fall for a game like that. Do you know this place where you're supposed to plant the bonds?"

"Certainly. Behind a loose stone in the archway where the Lone Hill Road runs under the railroad tracks."

"Got a picture of the locality in your mind?"

"I know it well—travel that way every time I motor out to our place in Westchester."

"So do I know it." Charlie's mouth widened comically. "Got chased through there once by a farmer's watch-dog. And if you'll remember, you've got to be pretty nearly inside the archway before you can tell what's going on there. So, with dozens of automobiles of all kinds passing along that road all the time, your watchers would have to be planted practically in plain view to see the one that stops and gets the jack."

RANGER, when he gave it thought, could not well deny the strength of the objection. His head dropped; the worried lines began to reappear in his face.

"And now this." Charlie caught up the letter from the Combine. "You say you found it on your desk when you came back from luncheon. Any idea how it got there?"

"I meant to speak about that." Ranger's mouth tightened. "I've had everybody in the building questioned, but no one admits being near the office."

"What does Bryan say?"

"I haven't had a chance to talk to him. He left before I did, to go to Newark, and hasn't got back yet. I don't see—" He shook his head perplexedly. "But, anyhow"—he grew grim again—"I'm going to give him his walking-papers—on suspicion."

"I wouldn't," Charlie demurred. "You want a fellow of that kind where you can keep an eye on him. Show him this letter and consult him about it. You won't learn anything, but it will make him feel easy. Then raise his salary. Tell him you want to show your appreciation of his faithful services."

"Not on your life! Instead, I'm going to have him grilled by the police. He'll weaken—you'll see; and we'll probably find out something."

"From Bryan?" — contemptuously. "Don't ever dream, Lorry, that he's anything but a mere blind tool for these people, a catspaw. They're not taking lads of Frank's caliber into their inner councils. As I told you before, it's brains we're up against—big, executive, conscienceless brains. So don't imagine you'll ever trip them up with any cute little detective-story wrinkles. This isn't a paper chase; it's war. I told you they were out for your whole roll; and this demand for a hundred thousand is only their opening gun. You'll see. We're facing a campaign where every chance has been foreseen and every move planned down to the last detail by a staff of experts. All that you can do is to get your packet of bonds ready and kiss them good-by."

Ranger struggled up to his feet.

"Are you telling me that I've got to make a present of a hundred thousand dollars to those brutes, with still no chance of seeing Hope?" He began angrily, but ended with an appeal in his breaking voice.

"You only lose the first trick to them—that's all." Charlie meant to be consoling. "And maybe we can save that."

But his thoughts were plainly far away. He rose and walked up and down the room, motioning Ranger to silence.

"I've got an idea, Lorry," he said at last; "but I don't want to talk about it—even to you. You just follow instructions—you've got to, anyhow—Mrs. Ranger won't stand for anything else—and place those bonds as they've told you. Then leave the rest to me."

"But you will need help of some sort." Ranger puckered his brows. "You're not going to tackle this crowd alone, single-handed?"

"Well, not exactly," drawled Charlie. "You used to go to the races considerably, I remember. Then, if you don't mind, I'd like to borrow a stop-watch and a pair of field-glasses."

WHERE the Lone Hill Road, one of Westchester County's main-traveled thoroughfares, dips under the railroad tracks, it passes through an archway of masonry between fifty and seventy-five feet long; and as this archway is high enough to accommodate a load of hay, and the surrounding country is one of level fields, the approach on either side is through a steep, walled cut.

Moreover, since both north and south of the crossing the road curves almost at right angles so as to run parallel with the tracks, the Combine showed undeniable strategy in specifying this as a cache for the ransom.

As Juarez Charlie had pointed out to Ranger, any one who could see the packet of bonds removed would have to be practically inside the tunnellike archway. There was no place along either approach or any spot commanding a view of the interior where a watcher could conceal himself. And, of course, the presence of a loiterer in the neighboring fields or along the tracks would only serve to warn the spoilers off.

But Charlie thought he saw a way to get round even these unpromising conditions. He did not go home that night after leaving Ranger's office, but, instead, registered at a cheap East Side hotel, where he spent the evening in an exhaustive study of an automobile road-map of Westchester County.

About two o'clock he came down-stairs and passed out, casually remarking to the night clerk that he was wakeful and thought he would take a walk before he turned in.

At a garage eight or ten blocks away where he had left his motor-cycle, he got it and chugged briskly over the Williamsburg Bridge as if heading for his lodgings. On the other side, though, he deviated from the direct route and twisted aimlessly through a succession of ill-lighted tenement streets until he was sure he had thrown off any one who might be trying to trail him, when he turned north and crossed back to Manhattan by way of the Queensboro Bridge at Fifty-ninth street.

Speeding up then, with the assurance that there was no further need for caution, he took a straight course out through the Bronx and up into Westchester.

Dawn found him at a little patch of woods along the railroad track about a half a mile from the archway at the Lone Hill Road crossing, where the ashes of a burned-out camp-fire and a scattered litter of rags, newspapers, old tin cans and worn-out shoes betokened a hobo "jungle."

Beside it ran a back road, little more than a wagon-track, crossing the railroad here on the level, and forking into the Lone Hill Road a quarter of a mile beyond. From his study of the map, he knew that this byway again intersected the main road about a mile and a half above, and he remembered that it was marked as rough and bumpy but passable for machines.

The wise campaigner, though, leaves nothing to chance. In order to make sure that it was open and without obstructions, Charlie rode out to the intersection with the Lone Hill Road and circled back by way of this to his starting-point.

In the archway at the railroad crossing he dismounted to take a look at the place designated as a depository for the Liberty Bonds, and from the instructions in the letter found no difficulty in locating it.

Just about midway of the tunnel, and at the height of a man's shoulder, there was a discolored streak on the masonry caused by dampness, and the mortar had crumbled from round one of the stones, leaving it loose. Testing it with his fingers, Charlie found the block easy to lift out. Behind it was a crevice, shallow, but still large enough to hold a package of securities.

The operation of opening up this makeshift vault, seizing the contents and putting the stone back could all be accomplished within a minute, and, owing to the peculiar conditions of the place, without risk of interference or detection. One had only to choose a moment when no one else was near the archway.

Satisfied at this confirmation of his previous conclusions, Charlie climbed back on his motor-cycle and returned to the "jungle." As he had expected, he appeared to have it wholly to himself. This was a season when its nomadic habitués were more apt to be in the West, following in the wake of circuses and street-fairs or answering the need for harvest-hands. The ashes of the last camp-fire were at least three weeks old.

Nevertheless, as a proper measure of precaution, he scouted through the entire patch of woods and, as the light grew stronger, climbed a tree to reconnoiter.

There was nothing to suggest that he had been followed or observed. He had not met or seen any one on his tour of investigation, and now the only sign of life or motion he could discern was the rousing-up of some cows in a pasture to the left and a blue spiral of smoke from a farmhouse chimney, indicating the lighting of the kitchen fire.

HE SLID down from the tree, and after hiding his motor-cycle carefully under a pile of brush, lay down in a sandy hollow and, pulling his hat over his eyes, prepared to sleep.

"Old-home week," he muttered drowsily. "Been quite some time since I stretched myself on one of these gaycat *chaises longues;* but I'll bet the sand sifts down the back of your neck and the crickets crawl into your ears just in the same old way."

His grumbling, though, was like that of an old soldier—more a matter of habit than of actual dissatisfaction. Within five minutes he was snoring.

When he woke, several hours later, the sun was warm on him, and he lay luxuriously for a while, listening to the varied and various wood-sounds, all long familiar to him. Finally he rolled over and pulled out his watch. It was almost eleven o'clock.

"Ah, Gibbs!" He addressed an imaginary valet. "Time to get up, eh?"

Charlie was inherently loquacious. It was as natural and necessary for him to talk as to breathe; and, in lieu of other companionship, he often fell back in his hours of solitude on characters of his own creation. The valet, an old favorite, was a composite of the many gentlemen's gentlemen Charlie had seen on the stage or met in fiction, and was, as might be expected, conventional almost to the point of gaminess.

"And what sort of a morning is it, Gibbs?" he now inquired.

Gibbs, in the person of Charlie, replied that, begging his pardon, it was fair and warmer.

"In that case," Charlie decided, "you need not bother to fill my tub for me this morning. Just hustle in the grapefruit—will you?—and start the percolator going. Then, while I am breakfasting, you may lay out my dark morning suit. Yes; the dark one"—as if meeting an objection. "I know the light gray or the mixed is more in harmony with the weather, but I have a special reason for wishing to appear unobtrusive to-day."

As he talked, he was munching at a sandwich he had taken from his pocket, and washing it down with drafts of coffee from a thermos bottle which was a part of the equipment of his motor-cycle.

"Excellent grilled kidneys," he observed; "but this Java is hardly up to the mark. Somehow, it doesn't have the kick that the jungle coffee used to have—near-lye boiled in an old tomato-can. But I am forgetting, Gibbs; how could you be expected to know 'bo cuisine? Hand me my stick and gloves—will you, my good fellow?—and we'll say nothing more about it. I must be on my way to an appointment in a rather elevated quarter."

He folded up his package of sandwiches, corked the thermos bottle and, rising, swung himself up with a good deal of agility into the tree under which he had been sitting.

It was a tall maple, and Charlie climbed from branch to branch until he found a crotch where, well concealed by the thick foliage, he could yet look out over the tops of the surrounding trees and gain a clear view of the Lone Hill Road as it ran to the railroad crossing and beyond on the other side. At this hour, although the traffic was not what could be called thick, the motors were flashing by in a fairly regular procession.

Unslinging his field-glasses, which he carried on the opposite side from the thermos bottle, and taking out his stop-watch, Charlie fell to studying these carefully, timing them over a stretch marked off by telegraph-poles.

"You may think I'm in training for the tin star of a country constable, Gibbs," he confided, for on second thought he had decided to take the convenient valet with him to his watch-tower, "a Nemesis for speeding motorists. But you'd be wrong, old thing! I'm merely clocking these birds to find out how long at the gait they are traveling it should take them to negotiate the crossing under the railroad track from the time they disappear into the cut on this side until they show up again on the other.

"Take that lad coming along now, for instance." He bent his glasses on a yellow roadster. "Stepping on her a bit, I'll say. Yes"—as the roadster completed the marked course—"he's hitting pretty close to fifty miles an hour. Now, let's see how long he takes to the cut." His thumb pressed the stem of the stop-watch as the yellow car dipped down into the hollow, and pressed again as it reappeared. "Thirty-seven and a fifth seconds," he announced.

"And now let's test the sedan"—as a more leisurely driven car appeared from the other direction. "She's running at twenty. And"—as it came up out of the cut—"she took just exactly a minute and a half.

"You begin to catch the idea now, don't you, Gibbs? If any car stays longer in that cut than its speed warrants, there's going to be some question in our minds about it—don't you think?—especially if it chooses a time when it has the road all to itself. Old Mr. Combine is pretty smooth"—he plumed himself vaingloriously—"but I'll bet they never took this into their calculations. It needed a Juarez Charlie to figure that out.

"Of course," he continued, "what we're doing now is only practise. Loring hasn't planted the bait yet, and there won't be any real trout-fishing until after that's been set. But I've tried the thing out enough to know that we've got the right dope. We're going to land 'em, young fellow me lad. You mark my words—we're going to land 'em!"

THE hours passed on. The sun had crossed the zenith and declined toward the west. With the aid of the fictitious Gibbs, Charlie in his leafy retreat disposed of an almost equally fictitious luncheon, his remaining sandwiches and what was left of the coffee in his thermos bottle glorified into an elaborate menu.

The rest of the time he put in at timing automobiles. With the wearing-on of the afternoon, the number of these increased. The cars came sometimes in flocks, or in long, almost unbroken strings; yet there were often intervals when for a while none would pass.

"It's on occasions like these, Gibbs," Charlie admonished, "that we want to keep our eyes peeled the widest. Then's when they'll do their collecting."

At half-past three Ranger's big touring car came along from the direction of town. Through the glasses Charlie could recognize the figure of the manufacturer himself in the driver's seat. He was quite alone and, as he neared the crossing, seemed to be glancing to right and left.

"Wondering what I'm up to, I guess," chuckled Charlie. "He never dreams, Gibbs, that we're cozily perched up here, piping off every little move that he makes. And since Loring is nobody's fool, it follows that the Combine won't dream it any more than he does."

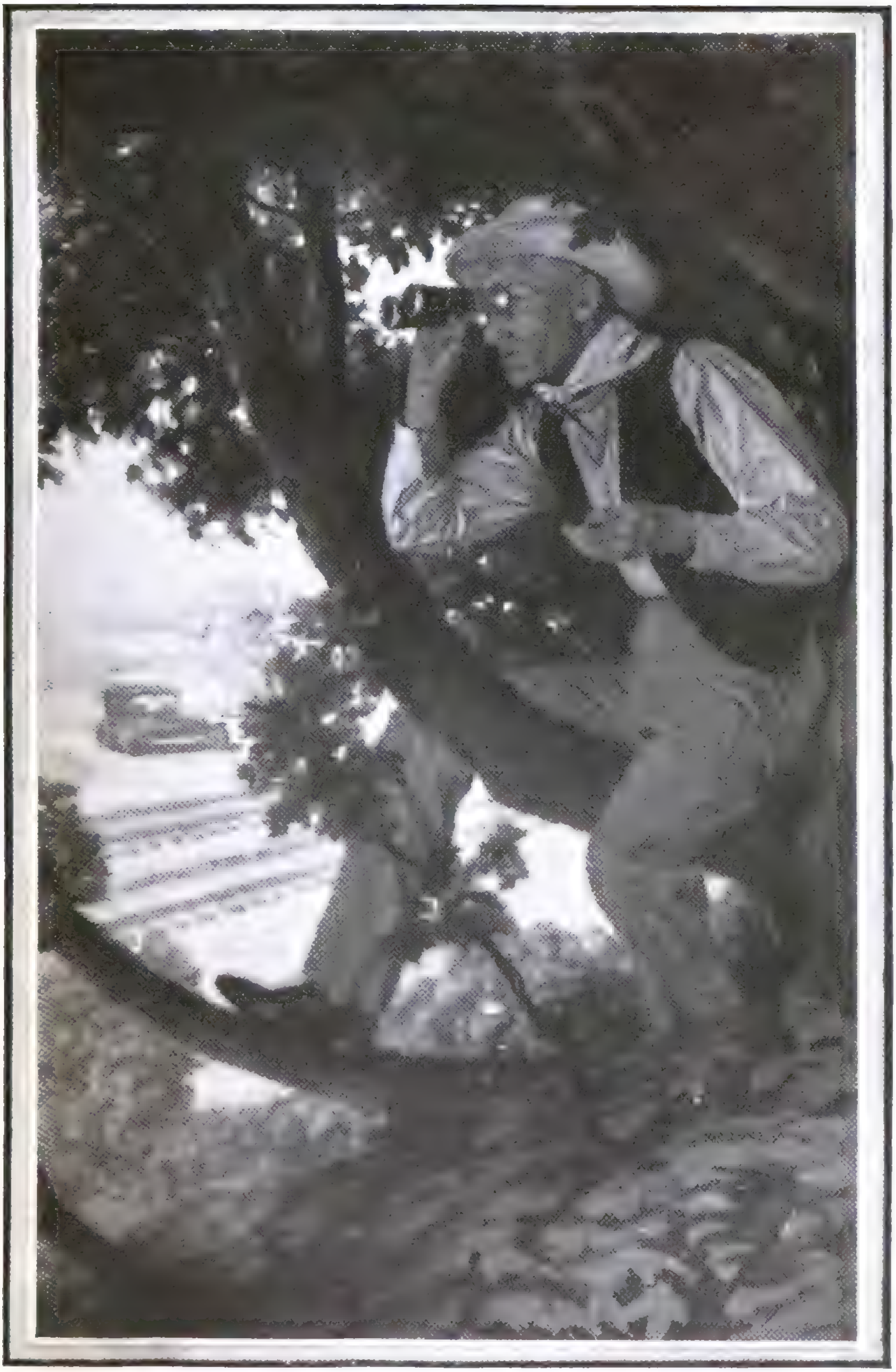
Yet his complacency did not keep him from very carefully timing the pace of the car as it swept along over the marked course.

As it happened, there was nothing else in sight when Ranger reached the cut, and he drove straight ahead.

"At the rate he's traveling, he ought to be out in one minute and seventeen seconds," Charlie calculated. "We'll get a line now, Gibbs, on just how long it takes to pull out that stone and put it back again."

But it was almost five minutes before Ranger reappeared on the farther side of the crossing.

"He'd be careful and a little slow," Charlie



Ranger's big touring car came along. Through the glasses Charlie could recognize the figure of the manufacturer himself in the driver's seat. He seemed to be glancing to right and left.

reflected; "so that's no fair criterion. I'd say, though, Gibbs, that anything that stayed down there longer than two minutes was a pretty safe bet to follow up."

He settled down now to unrelaxed watchfulness. A long string of cars came along from out of town, then an almost equally long string from the opposite direction, a couple of trucks, and then, from the north, a lone flivver containing two men.

AT THE sight of it, some instinct seemed to warn Charlie. He crouched to a keener attention and never took his eyes off it.

Just before it reached the cut, a trio of motors approached from the south and the flivver stopped, its driver getting out to fuss with the engine.

The three cars came up and passed. Nothing else was in sight in either direction. The driver of the flivver climbed quickly back into his seat and started for the cut.

"Two minutes is all I can allow them at the most," Charlie whispered excitedly.

The long indicator of the stop-watch swept round its circle. One minute gone. Another round, and still the car stayed down in the cut. Before it came into view again there had elapsed exactly three minutes and twenty seconds.

Hardly did the top of it appear over the edge of the dip before Charlie, slipping the stop-watch into his pocket, swung down through the branches.

"Come on, Gibbs!" he panted. "That's our meat for sure!"

He rushed across the "jungle," and jerking his motor-cycle out from under its concealing pile of brush, pulled it into the road. But when he attempted to start, he found the mechanism gone dead. Impatiently he leaned over to see what was the matter, and found to his amazement that the spark-plug was missing. Hastily he rummaged in his tool-bag for another; but although he would have sworn he had three spare plugs, there was none to be found.

Then he suddenly froze. On the flap of the tool-bag was chalked a rude "X" within a circle—the sign of the Combine.

Staggered and dismayed, he sank down at the edge of the roadside and buried his face in his hands. Never in all his irresponsible, vagabond life had Charlie known such a sense of utter, crushing defeat, such a feeling of raw incompetence.

The thing was plain enough to him now. In spite of all his efforts at camouflage, his artful twists and turns, the agents of the Combine had evidently succeeded in trailing him to the "jungle," and there, while he slept, had effectively put him out of the running. All that day as, perched in the tree, he had boasted his cunning, they had held him contemptuously scratched from the need of consideration. Mentally he crowned himself "King of the Boobs."

"Leave it to me," he had told Ranger. And now the hundred thousand dollars was gone, sunk without trace and, worse, a precious chance was lost to solve the enigma of Hope's whereabouts. What was he to say to Loring?

Charlie cast up his eyes, as he himself would have expressed it, like a dying duck, and wretchedly shook his head. He was facing down the by-road toward its junction with the Lone Hill Road on the other side of the railway, and now there swept across his field of vision the suspected flivver.

Driven hard in its progress toward town, it had covered the distance down from the archway during the two or three minutes that he had spent in lamentation. Charlie's plan had been to lead it along the highway on his motor-cycle and let it overtake and pass him, so as not to give the suggestion of pursuit. Now the sight of it, spinning triumphantly by, only added poignancy to his humiliation.

Then suddenly his fingers went fumbling at the leather case which held his field-glasses. He noticed that the rear left wheel of the flivver carried a new tire, and remembering that the Lone Hill Road had just been freshly oiled, it gave him an idea.

He jumped to his feet and leveled his glasses on the flivver's whirling wheels. A little thrill of hope woke in him. His eyes had not been mistaken. The three old tires had a smooth tread; that of the fourth was corrugated. Perhaps—perhaps it might be possible to follow that spoor on the oily roadway.

He bent another look through the glasses at the back of the receding car to take the number on its license-board. It was 2,155,633.

"You never can tell." He screwed up his lips. "Chances are that it's a false number;

but they might have forgotten to shift. Anyhow, that and the tracks are the only clues I've got, and I'll take 'em for what they're worth."

So, pushing the crippled motor-cycle beside him, he hurried on in the flivver's wake.

DR. BRISTOW was sitting at his desk in the outer office of his suite, going over a pile of letters. It was here that he received visitors who came to make arrangements for the accommodation of relatives or friends, and conducted the examination of prospective patients.

A handsome room, almost stately, with warm, subdued tones blending in a rich harmony. The massive pieces of furniture were of old Welsh oak beautifully carved. Everything—the fine rugs, many books and admirably chosen pictures and ornaments—showed a cultivated taste and a nice appreciation of values. It gave the doctor, as he knew perfectly, exactly the right background, dignified, successful, confidence-inspiring—the background of a scholar and a gentleman.

The clock on the mantelpiece had just struck nine, and Bristow's brows puckered as he surveyed the accumulation of mail yet to be considered. He had sat down to it immediately after dinner and was still not half through. Any sort of literary composition, even the answering of a letter, was a job he detested, and he would put it off until the last possible moment.

As he picked up the next envelope and drew out its enclosure, there came a tap on the door. Before he could respond, this was pushed open and Anita Copley entered.

"Ah, Anita!" He leaned back in his chair. "Strictly on time, and I've hardly begun. Vile nuisance, this sort of thing! No more of it for me to-night, anyway. Well"—he thrust the pile of letters away from him and turned toward her—"how is the little sister to-day?"

"Just the same." She helped herself to a cigarette, lighted it, and sank far down in an easy chair, stretching her feet out before her. "I've put her to bed and locked the door on her; she won't stir. She doesn't even get up in the morning until I tell her to. She seems slower, stupider every day. Her writing, too, is awful—more incoherent."

He nodded.

"She's strong physically, though. By the way, has she been hanging round Kelsey any more? I found her sitting under the trees with him the other day. I didn't like the combination, although I don't believe anything had passed between them."

"She's forgotten him," Anita was positive. "Notices him no more than she does any one else. He gave her a pencil and paper that day, and she stayed put because she hadn't sense enough to move on."

"That's all right, then." Bristow dropped the subject; his mind had turned in another direction. "Speaking of Kelsey, though, I think I can use him."

He picked out a letter from among those he had read and tossed it across the desk to her. It was a request from a well-known magazine for a series of popular articles covering modern methods of dealing with the insane, and named a handsome figure as payment.

"That is worth considering," he said, "not only for its advertising value but because it gives me a prestige, a cachet of high authority that it is wise to cultivate. A reputation of that sort might stand us in very good stead one of these days. But, Lord!" He scowled. "I'd rather be hanged than tackle it. It means no end of research, consulting the authorities, taking reams of notes, and then, on top of it all, the work of writing. Not for me! I had just about decided to write and refuse when I happened to think of Kelsey. He is fresh from the schools, up in all the new theories and, in addition, has a knack of expressing himself on paper. I could bring him in here, and——"

"Kelsey?" Anita sat bolt upright, her eyes dilating incredulously. "In here? With—with people coming and going, your letters, your private papers, a thousand chances——"

"My private papers are not here," he said crisply. "This room is restricted solely to the business of the hospital. I do not leave loose ends; you should know that by this time. And the correspondence will be looked after by Ward, as always; he may have his faults as a secretary, but I challenge any one to swerve him from his set routine or tamper with anything that gets into his hands. As to Kelsey's unbosoming himself to visitors—" He flipped his thumb and finger. "He knows one word from me would settle that; owing to a press of work, I am employing as an amanuensis a patient, clever, harmless, but—hopelessly unbalanced."

"But Kelsey wouldn't take the job!" she cried impatiently. "He wouldn't help you out that much. He hates you like poison."

"Of course he hates me," Bristow returned equably, "and he'd die before he'd do me a favor. But it's bound to strike him that the position would offer opportunities. He might happen on something incriminating that would serve to corroborate his story. He'd think of the chances to communicate with the great outside. My dear Anita, you are a remarkable woman, but you are astonishingly weak on psychology, no judge of human nature."

"Oh, don't begin one of your philosophical lectures." She spread her palms out flat. "Do as you please about it. You will, anyway; so what's the use objecting? All the same, I think you're foolish to trust that morose hound so far, even if he is yellow. Lord!" She curled her lip. "If I were a big, strapping brute like him, I'd soon beat my way out of here."

"You'd have a fine time doing it!" He showed the even line of his strong teeth. "He's wiser than you in that respect. And never fear about Kelsey. I know his kind. Thin-skinned, quick on the trigger; if they don't get a thing on the first dash, they lose heart and give up."

She shrugged indifferently, as if, having said her say, she was tired of the theme.

"How does the alderman feel about the way things are going?" she asked interestedly. "I saw him when he got in this afternoon, but it was only for a moment, and we didn't have a chance to talk. He's looking better for his trip."

"Oh, yes," Bristow granted; "and he's pleased—very well pleased indeed with the way everything's been handled. Why shouldn't he be? He wants to see us both at half-past nine for a conference"—he glanced at his watch—"so you'd better look in on sister now, and then go on up to his rooms. I must stop to give Morton some instructions about those new commitment-forms before I join you."

She slowly drew herself up from her chair and then stood waiting, submissive and yet hotly imperious.

"You've forgotten something."

"Yes? What?" He looked as if he had not an idea what she meant, but over his face was a glimmer of what at that moment she would have heartily agreed with Kelsey was his maddening smile. "Ah, I see; a kiss." He repaired his omission, but lightly.

She threw her arms about his neck and pressed her cheek to his.

"Run now." He gave her a little push. "The alderman hates to be kept waiting, you know."

"Damn you!" she said through her shut teeth, the angry fire in her eyes drying her starting tears. And then, with head thrown up, she walked out of the room.

Bristow left by another door to hunt up his assistant and give the instructions of which he had spoken. As he finished and turned to go, he paused.

"If I'm needed for anything important, Doctor," he said, "you'll find me up in Higgins' apartments. But don't disturb me unless it is imperative."

HARDLY had he passed out and gone his way before the door opened again and Kelsey strolled in. Morton's sanctum, a small cluttered office at the rear of the building, was not an especially inviting retreat, but he had fallen into the way of drifting in there almost every evening.

There was no other companionship for either of them; for Morton was an odd, mousy little man who left the hospital but rarely, even when off duty. He was a night-hawk, sitting up until all hours, and Kelsey often wondered when he slept. With a taste for long discussions, usually on some scientific subject, he would go on interminably, sometimes until the dawn showed at the windows; and, only too glad to have a listener, he winked at the infraction of the rule which required a patient to be in his room by nine o'clock.

Just at first he had been a little nervous over Kelsey's visits; but after he became satisfied that the other was not going to air his grievance against Bristow, he rather encouraged them. Bristow must know all about it, of course; nothing escaped his attention. And, since he had not interfered, it was evidently all right.

He had accepted the superintendent's diagnosis of Kelsey's condition implicitly; but since Kelsey's medical personality was congenial, he was willing to ignore any other phases he might be harboring. Only, he hoped the actor-personality would not soon get the upper hand. In that case, he was sure he would be sadly bored.

But on this especial evening Kelsey was seeking Morton's company for something more than mere sociability. That morning, the girl who had so attracted his interest had managed to hold another brief conversation with him, and in it had asked him a question on which she seemed to lay considerable stress. Unable to answer it himself, he had promised to secure the information she wanted; and he planned to glean it from Morton, if he could only succeed in weaning the little man from his abstract theories and speculations long enough to indulge in a morsel of gossip.

IN THE two or three days following that talk of theirs under the shadows of the old beech tree, Kelsey had been careful not to approach the girl again. Caution was necessary for one thing, and, for another, he had the feeling that when she was able to communicate with him, she would find some way of letting him know it.

Until she did so, he would remain in the offing, so to speak, near enough to be summoned even by the lifting of a finger and yet sufficiently aloof not to stir up an increased surveillance. Whenever she was in the grounds, he always, by one shift or another, secured a position where, if she chose to give the signal, she would have no difficulty in catching his attention.

But she only sat listless and mute on the porch, sometimes scribbling on a pad, sometimes staring before her with dull, apathetic eyes; or else she walked aimlessly about the lawns as one wandering without purpose in some darkened maze. Miss Copley was always with her, strolling at her side, or seated near at hand, busy with a piece of knitting.

He knew the girl was acting, but the way she held her pose, never relaxing for a moment into the normal, roused him to wonder and admiration for her courage and strength of will; and the pathos of that courage stirred his heart.

He was no longer so intent on his own escape. His prison held an attraction for him—the attraction of fathoming the mystery that surrounded her and helping her avoid the menace, whatever it might be, that hung over her. But what was that menace?

Kelsey liked mathematics and was a fair chess-player, but never before had he grappled with so contradictory and baffling a problem.

On the surface, it was easy. A nurse in the hospital had brought a mentally deranged sister to be under Dr. Bristow's care. Simple, quite; but also the most complex thing he had ever encountered. For the girl was not deranged. She was shamming, and doing it uncommonly well. That could only mean one thing—that she considered herself in a difficult, even dangerous position, surrounded not by friends but by enemies.

Why had she been placed in the sanatorium? It might be—such things have happened—for family reasons—a question of money or perhaps some entanglement, a love-affair. Kelsey rebelled restlessly at that suggestion. He preferred the other hypothesis. If there were an inheritance which her relatives did not wish to fall into her hands, what more likely than that they should take steps to prove her incompetent? But if this were so, why was she playing their game for them?

Kelsey gave it up; a dozen times he gave it up. There was no rime or reason in it. And instantly his mind would revert to it again.

Revolving the riddle as he mused on the porch in the sunshine, his glance strayed from under his down-drawn hat-brim to where she sat, the ever-present elder sister knitting beside her.

How alike the two were, and yet how different! Anita, beautiful in a way, but to him repellent—a woman pursuing the course of her perverse, unscrupulous will. Behind that ingratiating mask one sensed depths of experience, dark, unsavory. Those murky eyes, embers smoldering in their depths—that hard, deflected glance. He remembered the lovely topaz lights in the eyes of the younger sister. Her gaze, when not purposely obscured, was clear and direct.

But the points of distinction lay deeper still. Verna breathed a different air. About her was the atmosphere of one reared in ease and freedom and beauty. She had all the simplicity of good breeding; Anita's veneer was specious. Manners, speech, the intonations of their voices betrayed the gulf between them.

While he pursued the puzzle, never getting any nearer to a solution, a big, luxurious limousine turned in at the gates and drew up before the entrance. A ponderous, bent old man emerged, carefully assisted by his valet. Some one important it was without a doubt, for Bristow came down the steps to meet him and shook his hand heartily, accosting him with jovial *camaraderie*. There was an amount of luggage which was hastily unloaded and carried up-stairs. The new arrival gave some directions to the valet and his chauffeur, and then preceded Bristow into the house, as if perfectly familiar with the place. He stopped at the head of the steps, though, to speak to Anita Copley, who had hurried forward with smiling, almost sycophantic deference, and Kelsey got a fair view of him.

Heavy of body and shuffling of gait, he leaned on his stick and seemed to feel his way with it, as if his sight were impaired. His face had probably once been broad and ruddy, but now the flesh dropped from it in sallow, dewlapped folds. A tower tottering to its fall, but still a tower, arrogant in decay.

"So Alderman Higgins has come back," Kelsey heard the comment of some one behind him. "Wonderful how he holds on!"

Miss Copley had followed the old man and Bristow into the house; and, with her presence removed, Kelsey looked about for the girl. She had risen from her chair and was standing at the far end of the porch. As her eyes met his, they ordered, besought him to come to her.

Avoiding an appearance of haste, he moved down the porch and paused near her.

"Who is the old man that just came?" she asked. He wondered a little at the note of urgency in her voice over so immaterial a matter.

"Alderman Higgins, I heard some one say," he told her. "That is all I know."

She drew in her breath quickly as he mentioned the name.

"Find out all you can about him," she bade hurriedly, "and let me know."

"I will," said Kelsey. "But why?"

"Don't stop to talk now. We haven't time. She will be right back."

With her usual languid, uncertain step, she moved away toward her chair, and Kelsey returned to the other end of the porch, perplexed to understand the meaning of her request, yet rejoicing that she should have called upon him for a service.

He was a bit uncertain as to how he was going to carry out the promise he had made. He might inquire among the attendants, but it was doubtful if he would receive much satisfaction, and his catechizing would probably be reported to Bristow. Over-curiosity in regard to the affairs of the institution was not encouraged.

Morton, then? Yes; Morton was the one by all odds—an accurate and voluminous source of information, if only he could be induced to talk.

THE house physician, when Kelsey dropped into his office that evening, happened to be in a voluble mood. A medical journal lay upon his desk in which he had just been reading an article that controverted one of his pet theories, and he seized upon the opportunity to refute the fallacy, citing authorities and giving his reasons at length while he puffed indignantly at his old black pipe.

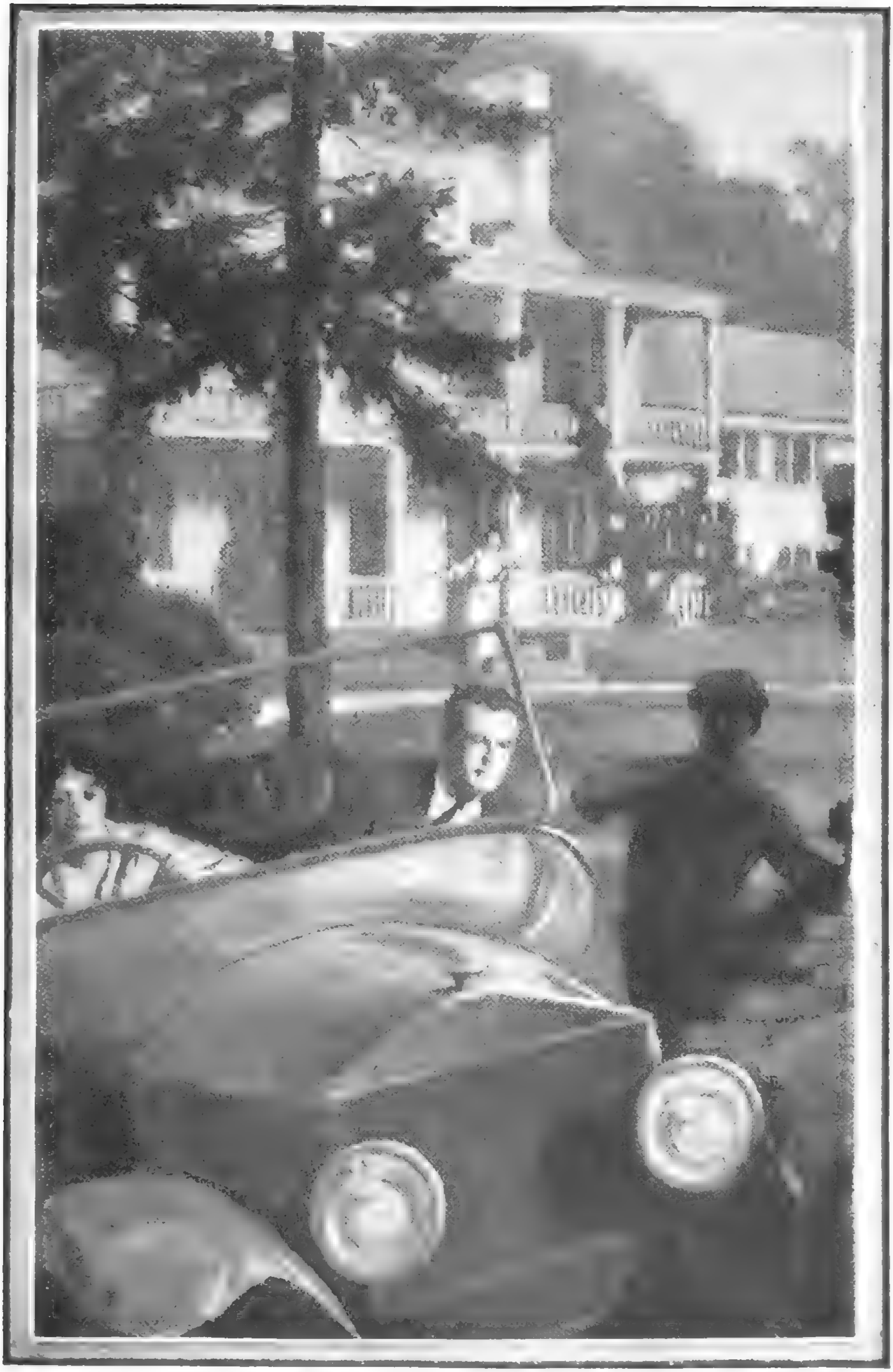
Kelsey was pleased to find that he could genuinely concur in the little man's views; and, by his advice and with his assistance, a letter was composed to the publication, which, they were convinced, left the offending author not a leg to stand on.

So delighted was Morton with the vigor of the rejoinder, and so grateful, that he expanded into unaccustomed warmth; and Kelsey took quick advantage of the propitious moment to strike.

"By the way"—indifferently—"who was the old rooster that arrived this morning in such state?"

Morton looked at him in surprise.

"Why, you know—or, sure enough, you didn't come here until after he'd left for Bermuda. That, my son, is ex-Alderman William Higgins. Mean to say you never heard of 'Hobo Bill'? Well"—as Kelsey shook his head—"a dozen years ago he used to be a power in New York, of about the same type, I guess, as some of your picturesquely named politicians out in Chicago. He started out in life as a tramp, they say; but somehow he managed to edge into politics, and cleaned up big—worth anywhere from seven to ten millions, I guess. He stays here when he's not off on one of his periodical trips. Funny old codger!"



Across the lawn she drove, heading straight for the gap in the wall. Their sudden action, the daring of it, seemed to paralyze the two spectators. Then there came a loud, angry scream.

"I should say so," Kelsey agreed. "It's the first time I ever heard of a man voluntarily making an insane asylum his headquarters."

"Oh, he's no bug. Half blind, pretty well broken down physically, but mentally keen enough—shrewd, devilish shrewd, let me tell you. And as to his being here, why, he had some nervous affection, you see, used to go on fierce sprees and all that, and Bristow got him into shape. They're like brothers."

"So?" Kelsey was mildly interested. "I saw the two of them out together this afternoon in Bristow's new car."

Morton filled his pipe and looked over it at Kelsey with a humorous, contemplative smile and a wag of his head.

"Yes; some car! I've seen the days when Bristow had to hoof it all the way to the station if he wanted to get into town."

"Times have changed, eh?" Kelsey was stretched out in his chair. "Not always so prosperous?"

"Not always." Morton's reminiscent smile still lingered. "When I first came here, seven years ago, things were so far from prosperous that we never knew from one week to another whether we could keep going or not. Bristow did wonders even then, but I was in a cold shiver all the time. I guess I'm naturally timid, and I know I'm like a cat. Once settled, I hate to change my quarters. Then, all of a sudden, we were on Easy Street. Bristow began putting all sorts of improvements on the place, buying more land, throwing out new wings, installing modern appliances, refurnishing, redecorating, splurging on cars, turning himself out like the lilies of the field, and making the old dump one of the highest-priced refuges for fashionable nuts in the whole East."

"Found the buried treasure under the old mill—what?" Kelsey yawned slightly.

Morton chuckled.

"Where the money came from I never knew. Bristow's close-mouthed, and it would take a bolder man than I am to question him about his affairs. My own opinion is that he made a lucky turn on the market. He's interested in Wall Street, I know; I sometimes take telephone messages from his broker.

"You see," he explained, "all this happened after Hobo Bill came into our lives, and I've always believed that he gave the tip that was responsible for our rise to greatness. Still, Bristow's clever. He would have got there anyhow. He was bound to go ahead. He's got brains and a determination that——"

The bell of the telephone jingled, and Morton interrupted himself to answer the call.

"Yes, Doctor," he said; then reluctantly, as he turned round eyes toward Kelsey, "Ye-es—yes; he's here, Doctor." After a moment, he hung up the receiver.

"It's Bristow," he said. "He wants to see you in his office right away." He couldn't keep the trepidation out of his voice.

"To see me? Now?" Kelsey looked up at the clock. "Why, it's after eleven! What on earth does he want with me at this hour?"

"He didn't say, but I suppose it's for your being out of your room. I'm afraid"—ruefully—"we're both of us in for it."

WITH a burst of invective at what he termed "pure, damned malevolence," Kelsey flung himself out of Morton's room and down the hall to meet his anticipated wigging. But when he pushed open the superintendent's door, he found no stern martinet bent on enforcing discipline.

Sleek and shining, Bristow lounged on the hearth-rug, looking down into the clear flame of a birchwood fire. The early-summer night was chilly down there on the Long Island shore, and he liked the warmth and glow.

The conference up-stairs from which he had just come had left him in the best of humors, and he felt in the mood to play a cat-and-mouse game with Kelsey, whom he regarded as lamentably lacking in finesse.

"Ah, Kelsey," he said pleasantly, taking a chair himself and waving hospitably toward another one, "sit down and have a cigarette." He pushed across the table a humidor containing various brands in the different compartments.

Kelsey stiffly declined both the chair and the cigarette. This unwonted cordiality made him wary. But Bristow's smiling geniality was proof against the rebuff.

"Rather late," he said; "but I was anxious for a little talk with you—about yourself." He was grave now, but kindly. "Although I may have seemed to neglect you, you have really been very much in my mind. To speak frankly, your present manner of life is not good for you; it leaves you too much time to brood. You are naturally active and vigorous, and you are simply running to seed. Occupation is the best medicine in the world for you. I realized this, but the form that occupation should take has so far stumped me. However"—he put his finger-tips together and tapped them gently—"something came up to-day which I think offers the solution."

Kelsey's hard blue eyes never left the alienist's face. He was following every word and, at the same time, trying to think ahead and fathom the purpose of these remarks.

Bristow lifted the letter containing the magazine offer from the table and, getting up, handed it to the younger man.

Kelsey rapidly glanced over it, but before he could speak, Bristow took up his thread again.

"I have neither the time nor"—with a mellow laugh—"the inclination to undertake it—too much research, too much work altogether. But it struck me that it would be just the thing for you. I would have to sign the articles, of course, but that is a detail. You must be rather fed up on idleness by this time, and as I shall be generous in the matter of terms, I think we should come to an agreement."

Kelsey laughed outright. That air of blandly conferring a favor when he was actually asking one was so essentially Bristowish.

THE man's vanity! He wanted to see himself in print, to have his name attached to some brilliant and erudite articles. He knew he couldn't do the work himself, and so he purposed utilizing his victim's gifts to his own greater glory. Kelsey saw himself pulling Bristow's chestnuts out of the fire. Not for a kingdom!

"Do I understand," he asked, with exaggerated humility, his mouth still twitching, "that you wish to entrust, not that hypothetical quantity, your honor, but your name, your scientific reputation to my unworthy hands?"

The shaft glanced off without leaving a scratch.

"Don't belittle yourself, my boy"—benignly. "You are, I know, an excellent and picturesque writer. You have been around a good bit, and you know what they are doing at other places as well as what we are aiming for here. You have the new authorities and theories at your finger-ends. It's all fresh in your mind, considerably more so than in mine."

"I'm sorry"—Kelsey's tone was elaborately satirical—"but it will be impossible for me to oblige you. My engagements at present are so numerous that I have no time for philanthropy."

"Think twice before you refuse," Bristow urged persuasively.

He went on, clothing the same arguments in fresh phrases, but all the time he was covertly scanning Kelsey's face, watching for that quick gleam of the eye which would show that the other had wakened to the latent possibilities within his proposal.

It came at last. Kelsey had been so intent on discovering some underlying motive in the request that he had not seen the advantage to himself. It was a great light, but still he could not divest himself of doubt.

"What's your game, Doctor?" he asked bluntly. "'"Will you walk into my parlor," said the spider to the fly,' of course. But why?"

Bristow lifted his hands.

"Kelsey! Kelsey!"—humorous, but a little grieved. "I offer you a chair, and you suspect a trap-door; a cigarette, and you imagine poison. Don't you see that by encouraging these suspicions of me, you only retard your own cure? Come; be a good sport and help me as well as yourself."

Kelsey's hands grasped the back of the chair before him until the wood cracked; his eyes blazed.

"I wouldn't pull you out of the water if I saw you drowning, or rescue you from a burning house! But it's foolish for a man to cut off his nose to spite his face, and, as you say, I'm pretty well fed up on loafing. Perhaps, on the understanding that I take over this work solely for my own diversion and advantage, and not in any sense to aid you, I might——"

"Put it on any grounds you please," Bristow interrupted. "Shall I expect you here to-morrow morning?"

"Yes"—curtly. "I'll draw up a sort of schedule to-night of the subjects to be covered, and have it ready to submit to you."

But, although he went at once to his room and tried to settle himself to the work before him, he could not give it his undivided attention.

As Bristow had foreseen, the opportunities of this new position, one after another, unfolded before him—chances of whispering a word to a friendly visitor, chances of smuggling a message into the outgoing mails, chances of discovering evidence that would nail Bristow as the criminal he knew him to be.

The ethics of the matter didn't bother him. It was pull-devil-pull-baker between Bristow and himself, and Bristow was too shrewd not to realize the risk he ran in employing an open enemy. The only thing that did bother him was that this new employment would curtail his opportunities for seeing the girl.

He must try to get a word with her to-morrow, and let her know of this latest shift in his affairs, as well as to inform her what he had learned of Hobo Bill.

DAYS very seldom go exactly as planned. Bristow hovered about all morning, helping lay out the work, consulting books, offering suggestions, keeping Kelsey so busy that he did not have a moment to slip away from his desk and look for the girl, and the afternoon was not much better. It was almost five o'clock before he felt free to leave the office and seek her.

A rapid survey of the porches and lounging-rooms showed him that she was not in the house, and he went on to the grounds, ostensibly for a breath of air after his day's work.

Most of the patients, he saw, with their attendant nurses, were clustered over at the side of the lawn, interestedly watching the destruction of a wide section of the wall beyond the encircling hedge. Already a considerable gap showed, and the workmen were busy tearing down the masonry still further. He made an inquiry or two, and learned that the seepage caused by an old spring carelessly filled in had undermined the foundation at this point and made it necessary to rebuild.

He stood looking on with the others, but his eyes were less engaged with the wall than in sifting the group of spectators for a sight of the girl; and he had about made up his mind that she was not present when he finally saw her sitting on a stone bench a little removed from the rest.

She was alone, the light of the sinking sun behind her. A pad of paper was on her knee, but for once she was not writing. Instead, her dreamy eyes were fixed on the gap in the wall and the vista of freedom beyond.

Kelsey looked about for the omnipresent nurse, but she was nowhere in sight; so he walked boldly over and seated himself on the bench.

He felt the girl start and turn, but he did not glance at her. With his elbow on his crossed knee, chin in hand, he sat watching the demolition of the wall.

"Where is Miss Copley?" he asked under his breath.

She edged a little nearer him and began to write on her pad.

"Ill," she answered. "She has a sick-headache. Another of the nurses is supposed to be looking after me, but she's busy now. Oh," she went on in a fervent whisper, "I've prayed that you would come to-day! I've dared so much on the strength of it. It was so necessary that I should see you."

"And, also, that I should see you," he broke in. "I have news. Bristow has engaged me to help him in the preparation of some magazine articles. I will be in his office in a position to know everything that goes on. Perhaps——"

"Wait!" she interrupted. "Before any one comes, I have something I want to give you."

She cast a searching glance about and then slipped a folded paper from between the sheets of her pad, letting it fall on the seat between them, screened by her frock.

He dropped his hand over it, and with deft legerdemain transferred it to his pocket, bringing up in its stead a cigarette.

"It's safe," he assured her.

"And now tell me about your work with Bristow," she said.

He did so briefly, explaining the features connected with it that might inure to their benefit.

"Also," he went on, "I have found out about Higgins, as you asked me to."

"Oh, yes?" But the interest she had shown the day before in the decrepit old man seemed to have waned.

"He's hand in glove with Bristow," said

Kelsey, concluding his sketchy report. "And I have no doubt is just as big a crook."

"And Copley, too," added the girl, with conviction. "They're all three crooks together."

Kelsey himself had much the same idea, but he hadn't wanted to say it. Strange that she should speak so of her sister!

But already her thoughts seemed to have turned in another direction. She was gazing again at the gap in the wall.

"Do you know anything of Dr. Bristow's engagements?" she asked unexpectedly.

He shook his head.

"Only that I heard him tell his secretary that he would be attending a dinner of the medical society in town to-morrow night."

"To-morrow night!" For some reason this seemed to her extremely important.

"And Copley's sick-headache will last two or three days; they always do." She spoke musingly, as if the two facts to her held some connection. Although he did not look at her, he was conscious that her whole frame was tense. She seemed miles away from him.

FEARING that he had already stayed too long with her, and knowing of nothing else to be said, Kelsey rose to go; but she detained him with a quick gesture.

"Wait!" He could see that her fingers were trembling as she guided her pencil; there was an excited tremor in her voice. "I must see you to-morrow. Don't let anything prevent. I have an idea. We may be able to get away."

He nodded. A nurse was moving toward them and he dared not linger.

"I will lay off about noon and find you."

For one moment he forgot the restrictions upon them and looked at her. And she forgot, too, and looked back at him. Then they remembered, and he moved off hastily toward the wall, as if to take a closer view of the work.

But he did not even see the shorers at their toil; they were mere blurred shadows against the sunset's gold. Her face lived before him; her voice still fell thrillingly upon his ear. That was reality.

He was eager, of course, to see what the message she had given him contained, but he deliberately held himself in check. He ate his dinner, talked an hour or so with Morton, and it was not until he was safe in his room and had taken every precaution against surprise that he ventured to look at it. It began without preamble:

> I was brought here; I don't know how. The next day—it must have been the next day—Dr. Bristow told me that I had been very ill and was in a hospital, but that I would see my father and mother soon. I believed what he said for a little while. But when the effects of the drug wore off—I must have been given a drug—I felt well and strong. My parents did not come; there were excuses. I insisted on going home. Dr. Bristow and the Copley woman wouldn't let me. When I tried to go, they prevented me by force. I screamed and struggled. Then the doctor put a drug into my arm. These scenes happened several times, and always ended in the same way. They never let me get out of that one room. Then, one day, when Copley thought I was asleep, I heard her talking outside my door to another nurse. This woman said,
>
> "Is your sister getting any better?" And Copley answered in a weepy voice, "No; she'll never be any better, I'm afraid." They talked a while, and then the other nurse said: "If you were a little younger, dearie, and hadn't been here for years, I'd try to get the hundred thousand dollars' reward for that missing Hope Ranger. You're almost a dead ringer for her."
>
> Then it all flashed over me what they were doing, why I, Hope Ranger, was in this place——

The sheets of the letter shook in Kelsey's hands. He looked blankly down at the page before him, overwhelmed by a feeling of loss and desolation as if something beautiful had vanished from his life.

So the problem was simple after all—obvious as it appeared. A pity. What a pity! That wonderful girl! And this was her delusion, her fixed idea. She imagined herself to be Hope Ranger, the girl whose name was on everybody's lips. Perfectly sane in every other respect, mentally above the average—all this gallant effort of hers for nothing. He lifted the paper again.

> After I heard those women talking and understood what it meant, I nearly went mad trying to think what to do. I had already tried to bribe Copley, but she is in love with Bristow and absolutely ruled by him. So I just sat thinking—plans, plans seething through my brain.
>
> I was so furious, so despairing, so bent on finding some way out that I wouldn't even look at those two, the only persons I saw. I wouldn't speak to them or notice them in any way. They couldn't understand the reason for the change in me, and were surprised. I saw them exchanging glances. And then it came to me, I don't know how, that if I pretended to be silly and not remember anything, they might let me out of that room and go about as I saw the others doing from my window.
>
> I worked up another scene with Copley when I knew the doctor was away. I fought to get out the door, and when she gave me the drug to quiet me,

I accused her of having given me an overdose in her excitement. She denied it, but was bothered. Then I pretended to lie in a stupor for almost an entire day. When I came to, I acted as if I were stupid, as if I were some one else. I said I was a writer, and asked for pencils and paper and wrote pages of nonsense.

I heard Bristow talking to Copley. "Shamming," he said at first, but she was convinced by this time that she had given me an overdose, and finally got him to thinking so, too. I heard him explaining to her about "shock" and something about "a congenitally weak brain." She was upset about it all, but he told her, "Better so, if it's true."

He put me through all kinds of tests—surprises, everything. It was dreadful, but my nerves are strong and I was fighting for my life. He talked to me about my parents, my home. I was indifferent. Then he got to trying to make me remember things that aren't true. He told me my name is Verna Copley, and I repeat it after them like a parrot. I have only forgotten my pose with them once. That was when Copley tried a hat on me and I caught a glimpse of myself and burst out laughing. But it was so grotesque that even an imbecile would have laughed.

I have been afraid to make myself known to any one. To say that I am Hope Ranger would only convince most people that I am the lunatic I appear. But I am Hope Ranger; I am! And I know that you will believe me, just as I believed you.

WHEN he had finished the last words, Kelsey mechanically, thoroughly tore the letter into fragments, threw them into an ash-receiver and set a match to them. Then he dropped into a chair.

It seemed to him that there were tiny hammers in his brain, reiterating with every beat: "Hope Ranger! Hope Ranger!"

His memory reverted to that scrap of newspaper he had found on the lawn. Did he still have it? He rose and searched through all his pockets, but without success. It must have been destroyed. Nor was he able to recall very distinctly the pictures of the missing girl it had contained. He had certainly not been struck at the time by any marked likeness between those pictures and the girl who came and sat with him under the beech tree.

But, then, one couldn't go much on mere newspaper illustrations; and, anyhow, he had not been especially interested. What he had wanted was news, and he had been disgruntled to find the thing only a sheet from a Sunday supplement.

He dropped that phase of the evidence and turned instead to his own observation of her as a trained alienist, and, as he did so, the excited chaos of his brain was succeeded by a surprising, flooding relief.

She was sane. He knew it. He could not be deceived. The idea that a person of her self-control, her clear perception was harboring a delusion was nonsense. And if she said she was Hope Ranger, it was so. He believed her.

Doctorlike, though, he kept mentally buttressing his decision with arguments from the books, and it struck him that he had read only a day or two before a passage which seemed to have a direct application. He reached over to his book-shelf for the volume he wanted, and as he did so a folded yellow piece of newspaper dropped out—that fragment of Sunday supplement. He had thrust it in there as a book-mark.

Spreading it out on the table, he studied its array of portraits. There could no longer be any doubt. The hair was arranged differently, but the features, the contour, the expression were the same as Verna Copley's. He had all the confirmation he needed. Still, he was glad that, "not seeing, he had yet believed."

His eyes ran down to the text of the newspaper story below the pictures, and as he read it over again, his face took on a perplexed scowl. Why, when such wide-spread efforts were being made to recover the lost girl, was she held here a prisoner?

Kelsey believed, as he had said, that Bristow was capable of anything. The man was a crook. That many-sided brain of his was a criminal one. If he would deal in stolen jewels, he would engage in or connive at abduction. But what was his motive? How did he expect to get away with it? What could he gain?

Suddenly the conversation between Miss Copley and the other nurse, which the girl had reported in her letter, recurred to him: "If you were a little younger, dearie, and hadn't been here for years, I'd try to get the hundred thousand dollars' reward for that missing Hope Ranger. You're almost a dead ringer for her."

He sprang to his feet and brought his hands soundlessly together. It was a carefully conceived plot, based upon the remarkable resemblance between the two women. By bringing Hope Ranger there as the demented sister of Miss Copley and adopting a few other simple subterfuges, she could be held in perfect safety. No one would ever dream of suspecting her true identity, or crediting it, if told.

And the object, of course, was to extort money from the girl's wealthy father. But what then? The time must come when Ranger would either refuse or be unable to comply with further demands. In that case—what? Bristow and his associates could not release their prisoner. She knew too much. They would not care to keep her, a constant source of danger on their hands.

Good God! He clenched his fists. She was in peril—actual, deadly, imminent peril. And he was powerless to aid or protect her.

THROUGHOUT the night, Kelsey sat in his chair. The thought of going to bed did not even occur to him. It was the dark of the moon and he had no light in his room, but the shadows about him were nothing beside the heavy, dense blackness that invaded his spirit and seeped through his brain.

On only one point could he think clearly, or come to a decision—he must see the girl without delay, at the earliest possible moment. He must warn her to be on her guard, to question every move or suggestion of those about her.

Perhaps, too, by consulting together, he and she might evolve some plan for her escape. That was now far more imperative than his own. But he did not have much hope. He had thought and thought all night, but without striking anything that offered any promise of success. He remembered that she had hinted of some idea of her own, but he took small stock in that. It was doubtless only one of the many expedients he had already considered and discarded. At any rate, he must see her.

As the day broke, he eagerly scanned the morning sky and thanked fortune that it was fair. If the weather were rainy or threatening, she would not be allowed on the grounds. The sun, though, was rising on a model summer day, rare enough for any poet's praise.

He knew that there was no chance of her appearing before ten o'clock; and so, after breakfast, he went to the office and pretended to be deep in his research work, although his eyes were constantly seeking the clock.

On the stroke of ten he hurried out, but only to find her closely attended by the nurse who had been with her the day before. The same thing was true at eleven, and again at twelve.

At half-past twelve the patients permitted the liberty of the grounds were recalled to the house for luncheon, and Kelsey knew that, under the exact routine of the place, none of them would be allowed out again until two.

He was in the depths by this time. If that nurse stuck to her like a chestnut-bur all afternoon, there would be no opportunity for him. Somehow he must force one.

But when he made his next reconnaissance, his heart leaped. Hope, as he called her now to himself, was sitting alone on the stone bench where he had talked to her the day before. She was writing on her pad as usual, and the nurse had turned her attention to a more difficult patient.

Kelsey sat down a foot or two away from her and pretended to watch the men pulling down the wall. It was plain from the progress of the work that the faulty section would be completely down by night and the workmen ready to lay a new foundation the next day.

The girl went on scribbling, her face turned a little away from Kelsey, but, as he seated himself, she began talking low and fast.

"I saw you looking for me this morning, but it was impossible to get rid of that woman. I was in despair. It is so absolutely necessary that we should talk together to-day."

"It is, indeed," he said earnestly; "more so than you think. I want to tell you——"

"Let me talk first," she interrupted. "I've got to make clear to you my plan for getting away while I have the chance. Dr. Bristow is going to town this evening?"

She asked the question so anxiously that it distressed him. Poor child! Did she think that the mere fact of Bristow's being away from the sanatorium for an evening was going to help the situation?

"Oh, yes," he answered. "I heard him on the telephone this morning telling the chairman that he would be at the meeting without fail."

"Then we can manage it!" There was a thrill in her voice. "Listen!"

And, while she scribbled, she unfolded to him a plan so simple and yet so supremely audacious that it took his breath. Before she had half finished he had caught her idea and was on fire with it.

Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922

"Careful!" she warned. "Your face is shouting our secret."

He drew his cap down over his eyes and, clasping his hands behind his head, stretched his feet out lazily.

THE nurse came toward them, and Hope, with a swift movement, slipped her pencil beneath her on the bench. She looked nervously about, and then, as the woman stood before her, she glanced up with troubled appeal.

"I've lost my pencil," she said. "I was writing a beautiful story, but what can I do without a pencil?"

Kelsey, as if he hadn't noticed her before, took a pencil from his pocket and handed it to her. She thanked him and began to write again.

"She'll keep that up for hours," the nurse said to Kelsey. "Not a word out of her, and never moving from the spot. Lucky for me, too! Her sister is on the sick list and I've got charge of Verna, but my hands are full this afternoon with Miss Susie Doane. She's seeing mashers peeping out from behind every bush trying to flirt with her."

"Nothing serious the matter with Miss Copley, I hope?" Kelsey murmured politely.

"Oh, no; just a headache. She's up this afternoon, but she's a little shaky yet, and doesn't want to go on duty until to-morrow——"

She was interrupted by a scream. The patient she had just left was backing away in terror from a passing gardener.

"All right, Miss Susie!" called the nurse. "He won't speak to you. I'll be right there and protect you." She turned to the girl on the bench. "Now, you'll stay here, dear, until I come for you, won't you?" Then she hurried away.

"There's only one thing that bothers me"—Hope resumed the discussion of their plan—"and that's the question of time. They force us to go in at six o'clock, you know, and you may not be able to do your part so soon. If not, I must stay behind."

"I will never leave without you," Kelsey declared firmly.

"You must. To-night is our one opportunity. Promise me that, whatever happens, you will go. It doesn't matter if I am left behind for the short time it will take you to reach my father."

"It matters so much," he returned, "that I would never dream of leaving you alone with these people. But that is not all. I not only won't leave you behind but I can't." And he told her why.

"That makes it more complicated." Her voice fell. "But never mind," she said resolutely. "We're going. Nothing shall stop us."

They talked a moment or two longer, and then Kelsey, giving a start as if he had just wakened from a reverie, got up and walked back to the house.

There was a hard smile on his lips as he passed through the hall. By the irony of circumstances he was booked to play the rôle which Bristow had fastened on him. For the next two or three hours his actor-personality was to have a chance, and, catching a glimpse of himself in a mirror at the end of the corridor, he reflected that he needed no make-up for his part. Nature had provided that. His sleepless night, the full realization of the dangers that threatened Hope, the feeling that he was about to embark on the most momentous adventure of his life had left him haggard and pale.

Back in the office again, he worked steadily for a few minutes and then dropped his pen and pressed his hands to his temples with a groan.

"Something the matter, Doctor?" Bristow's secretary, who was working across the room, looked up sympathetically.

"A touch of my old enemy, neuralgia," Kelsey answered. "I slept in a draft last night."

"Why don't you lay off?" urged the secretary. "I'll explain to Dr. Bristow."

"No," said Kelsey drearily; "I'll stick. It's rather important to get these notes off this afternoon. I had a pretty bad twinge just now, but it may pass away."

But again and again during the afternoon he writhed as in unmistakable pain. After the secretary left at five o'clock, he made hardly any pretense at writing, but sat with his head in his hands, twisting about in his chair as if a fresh paroxysm had seized him.

At about ten minutes of six, Bristow came in, wearing a cap and a motor-coat over his evening clothes, ready to start for town, and he at once noticed the condition of his collaborator.

"What's wrong, man?" he asked quickly. "You look done up."

"One of my ghastly neuralgic attacks." Kelsey seemed to suppress another groan. "I'm afraid I haven't been able to accomplish much this afternoon. The darned thing has been growing worse all day, and although I've tried all my usual remedies, I don't seem to get on top of it. I'm wondering if you will give me a shot of morphine—a good stiff one."

"Surely." Bristow laid down his gloves and, passing into a lavatory just off the office, prepared his hypodermic.

Kelsey, with his eye on the clock, waited, barely able to control his impatience. The precious minutes were racing away. How slow the beast was! Would he never come?

AT LAST the doctor was back. Kelsey had taken off his coat and rolled up his shirt sleeve, and now he apathetically extended his left arm.

But as Bristow bent over to apply the needle, Kelsey's right shot up in a quick, wicked smash to the doctor's jaw. A good boxer in his college days, he had never driven to the button with a better aim. The blow landed squarely on the side of the chin, and, backed by the nervous tension behind it and Kelsey's overpowering hatred of the man, almost with force enough to split an oak plank.

Bristow's head snapped back, and, lifted fairly off his feet, he went backward to land across a leather couch several feet away, where he lay dead to the world.

Kelsey snatched the hypodermic from the floor, and jerking open the cuff of Bristow's shirt, pushed it back and drove the needle into his arm.

"There—I guess that will hold you for a while!"

As he straightened up, the clock was on the stroke of six. This was the hour when the nurses and attendants would be shepherding in the patients, and the veranda would be deserted. With one vindictive glance at the unconscious Bristow, Kelsey walked out of the office and locked the door.

But all this had taken time. As he hurried through the hall, he was tortured with apprehension. If he were too late? If Hope had already been driven into the house?

A glance from the door, and he saw that everything else was as he hoped. There was no one about. Even the chauffeur was not in sight, having left the big gray car in the roadway while he strolled around to the side of the house to engage in badinage with one of the attendants.

Kelsey's eyes swept the lawn. Hope was nowhere to be seen. And then he saw her. She was clinging to one of the porch pillars, obstinately resisting all the efforts of the nurse to disengage her.

Kelsey took a step toward them and the nurse saw him.

"Do help me, Dr. Kelsey," she begged. "I don't know what's got into her. She's usually so amenable, but now she refuses to go in. I've sent for her sister; but maybe if you speak to her, she'll listen."

Kelsey waved the woman to stand aside and laid his hand on Hope's arm. As if yielding to a superior will, she let go of the pillar, and, with the manner of soothing her, he led her along the veranda.

"Now!" he said, when they reached the steps leading to the drive; and, catching her hand, he rushed her down and swung her up into Bristow's big car. As he leaped in after her, she grasped the starting-lever, threw in the gears, and they were off.

Across the lawn she drove, heading straight for the gap in the wall.

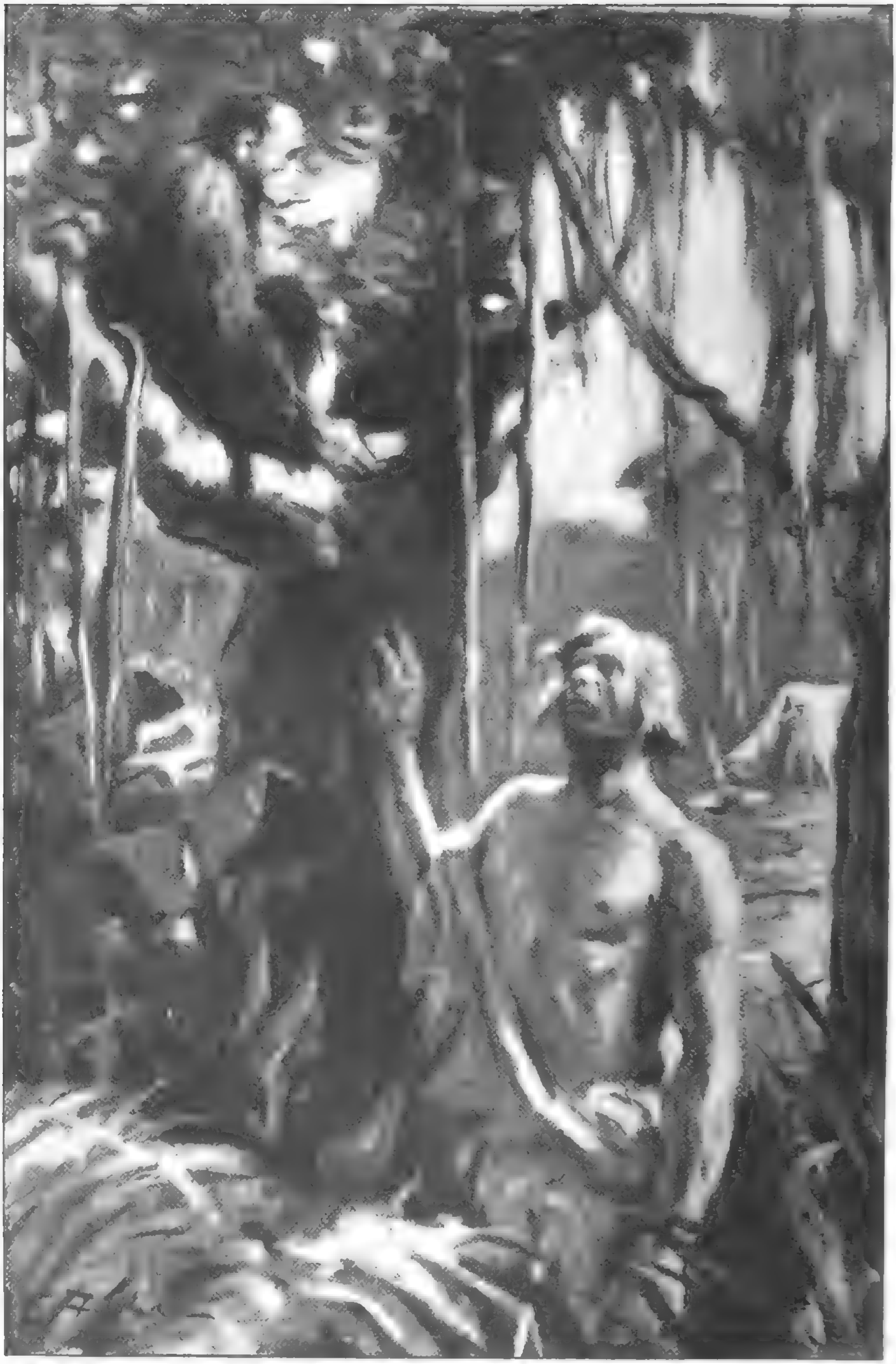
A man stationed there whirled about, thinking the car was running wild, and scrambled for safety. He was just in time. Through the hedge they smashed, then, with a bump and a lunge, leaped the trench which had been dug for the wall's new foundation and with a deft twirl of the wheel swung into the road beyond.

"I couldn't have done that, even if I knew how to run a car!" Kelsey gasped. "As I told you, I never drove one in my life. I had to have you with me to get away."

There had been no sound behind them. Their sudden action, the daring of it, seemed to paralyze the two spectators. Then there came a loud, angry scream. Kelsey, glancing back, saw Anita Copley flying down the veranda steps, calling for the chauffeur and shouting orders as she ran.

"They'll be after us like a shot!" He knew the woman's ability in a crisis. "Drive like the devil!"

**The escaping pair meet with some truly thrilling adventures. The first of these are related in the next instalment of "Swallowed Up." See June EVERYBODY'S—out May 15th.**



In the branches above something else moved—a great, hairy form, half masked in the exotic growth. Death, it seemed, lurked overhead.

# The Spirit *of the* Beast

*In This, the First of a Trilogy, the Author Presents Something Absolutely New in Jungle Stories. It's Entertainment Plus*

## By Alan Sullivan

Illustration by Ernest Fuhr

FROM Jennison's camp on a nameless tributary of the upper Congo one could look up-stream and down perhaps half a mile. Then the jungle colonnade closed off the black water that slid to the sea fourteen hundred miles away. Close to the shore, the two tents occupied a grassy plot where, at times, a breath of cool air rested like a benison. All around was the forest—a vast blanket of exotic growth—which had called to Jennison and his confrère, Thesiger.

Throughout the day all was quiet, but when the curtain of night descended from the torrid skies, the jungle found its voice. Behind the tangle of trunks and lianas there was a coughing, a grunting and barking. Invisible forms moved with stealthy steps, and the tree-tops awoke with clear notes like those of distant bells. The water's edge became populous with thirsty mammals, while death crouched on broad pads close at hand.

Jennison, sitting at the door of his tent, drank it all in with a silent satisfaction that did much to compensate for the weariness of his body. The place had been a mine of information. The report, when published, would put the seal on his reputation. He had had doubts about choosing a surgeon instead of a brother biologist; but as things stood, the monograph would be his own. Thesiger, as he shot out his arguments in Liverpool, had been determined to come. And this, Jennison knew in his inmost heart, was the last expedition he himself would ever make. Just then Thesiger moved across from the other tent and sat down.

"You look tired," he said.

"Perhaps I am." Jennison nodded. "It's something like what is called the 'fatigue of metal.' Nothing breaks, but there's a fibrous change that alters its character. I feel as though my fiber were changing."

"You've had forty years of this sort of thing." Thesiger's eye took in forest and river. "Enough for any man."

"Not exactly—nothing is quite enough in biology. Another five years, and—my God, if I could only be sure of that!"

Thesiger did not answer. One year in the tropics had unsealed for him a new fount of knowledge. He knew now that these hot, moist airs and the pulsing fecundity around them invested the human mind with strange attributes, and that mere intelligence was not seldom swamped by the nameless influence of the jungle. And Jennison had been acting queerly of late.

"Only five years," went on the other man, with a little lift in his voice. "Then no more malaria, no more beastly swamps. I've been reading that last thing by Lancaster—you know—the American. Queer how near these fellows can get without quite

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arriving! I split with him on that instinct argument. Take this country all around us—it's full of amazing instinct—quite as remarkable as what we call our intelligence."

"You don't bracket instinct and reason, do you?"

"Why not? In the human it still remains our strongest motive factor. Intelligence merely represents the varying phases."

Thesiger smiled.

"I don't hold with you there."

"Why?" There was a note of irritation in the reply. "Because you are afraid—they are all afraid—but another five years, and I could prove it."

"How?"

"That dumb orang we saw a month ago. He could not speak—but he made himself understood. How? By sign and expression. Now, what was the thing that enabled the others to understand—instinct or intelligence? And what is the difference? Are not our passions our strongest motives—and are they not an expression of instinct?"

HE RAMBLED on, his voice jerky; and to Thesiger, watching him with keen analysis, it seemed that the heart of Africa was visibly casting its mysterious spell over this brilliant mind. These were not arguments that Jennison would have advanced in cool deliberation. But here, hundreds of miles from the next white man, it was above all necessary to avoid any friction. Thesiger realized that. The sword of Damocles hung low over friendship in the jungle. Suddenly Jennison turned on him.

"I'm getting old, and I hate it!"

Thesiger made a deprecatory gesture.

"You're a marvel—for your age."

The added phrase threw his companion into a fit of anger.

"My age—that's just it—but you needn't rub it in." He curved a long, sinewy arm. "You couldn't stand up to that—even at my age!"

"I know I couldn't. My dear man, that's obvious."

Jennison pushed out his lips, and through half-closed eyes his mind seemed to project itself into the jungle. His face had a curious pallor beneath its tan, but it was the eyes themselves that Thesiger liked least.

"Prague — Paris — London — what have they taught me? Nothing! Africa—Ceylon—Malaysia—that's where it is—my secret! Why did I waste so many years reading the scribbles of those who thought they knew? At Hamburg—at Hagenbeck's—beside the enclosure of the larger apes, I got nearer the truth. Look!"

He pointed up-stream, where, on a grassy ledge that overhung the water, a great orang-utan came out to sun himself. There was no noise, and the nearly level rays fell full on the great skull and massive black-brown shoulders. They stared at each other, man and ape, till it seemed to Thesiger that between them flashed something mutually understood. The man raised his hand and the ape vanished.

"A young male—about eight years." Jennison's voice dropped, then seemed to find new emphasis. "That operation of yours—eighteen months ago—how did it turn out? It was the gland of a chimpanzee, wasn't it?"

"Yes. It turned out very well, extraordinarily well for an experiment. He was a man about seventy. I saw him the week before we sailed. Put twenty years on to his life, I should say."

"Nothing else?" Jennison sent one quick glance.

"What do you mean?"

"Listen. I'll have to get back to the matter of instinct. You surgeons dabble your red fingers in tissues and glands that may possess a potency beyond your wildest thoughts. You work somewhere along the line between the known and the unknown. Is it not possible to prolong life at the cost of that which is worth more than mere existence?"

"I don't quite follow. The operation is unusual—as yet; but it won't be in a few years. My patient is better, stronger, and has more vitality than for a long time past."

"And you transplanted only organs, and no trace of instinct?"

Thesiger laughed.

"You overestimate my surgical ability."

"And this tissue that you move from one body to another, in the latter of which it becomes incorporated, it cannot possibly do anything except rejuvenate the patient, who is now part man and part ape?"

"Nothing whatever. I am convinced of it. The ape part is infinitesimal."

Jennison lit his pipe and smoked silently. Presently his eyes began to gleam.

"I am a fortunate man."

"Why?" demanded the other.

"I will tell you. I am old. My body is more aged than you think. My blood pressure is high. I must have five years more—just five. You shall give them to me."

"What the devil are you talking about?"

A long hand shot out and took Thesiger's arm in a convulsive grip.

"When you have planted the thyroid gland of an ape, you may possibly transplant his instincts. We were all apes once. Some of us moved on; some stayed behind. My friend across the river is of the latter family. He is full of life—and instincts. I intend that his life shall be mine—or one like it—and I will risk acquiring the instincts for the sake of the five years."

He jumped up and began pacing along the bank. Thesiger held his breath. He was enough of an alienist to recognize mental trouble when he saw it, and here, in the heart of Africa, environed by a sleek, black river and the vast expanse of miasmatic swamp, what more natural than that Jennison's mind, faced with the mysterious secret he believed himself to have so nearly solved, should quiver in the balance? Presently the other man came back and flung himself down.

"I must tell you more—it will justify you. Before this thing is done I will make my deposition—that it is at my imperative demand—and in the interests of science. More than that, you will share in the reputation we shall soon achieve. Never before have I offered to share that with any one."

Thesiger felt a little sick.

"It's absurd; it's impossible!"

"So?" The biologist shook his head with a smile at which the surgeon's blood ran cold. "In the tropics nothing is impossible. That is what Marnier said when I sent him my monograph on the connection between the Cingalese apes and local prehistoric ruins. I know Marnier thinks that I am careless about my work—that I fling it at the world, and do not carry it far enough. But after this expedition he will not think so any more—and that will be thanks to you. So do not say again that the thing is absurd or impossible. It vexes me. When I am ready, I will let you know. Do you hear?"

Thesiger was thinking too hard to do anything more than nod, and when, a few minutes later, he saw Jennison haranguing the head boatman in the native tongue, he yielded to a wave of helplessness and horror. In the tropics all things were possible. He was three hundred miles from the nearest settlement and knew but little of the local dialect. Jennison was, in any case, the head of the expedition, and exhibited, as well, a curious influence over the black folk who lived in scattered villages perched on stilts along the river-bank.

IN THE next few days there was ample opportunity for reflection. Jennison took it into his head to go on long tramps, alone save for a couple of blacks, and returned from these more worn than ever, and with a mysterious light in his dark eyes. Then, one morning, Thesiger found the camp deserted. He was staring about when Jennison emerged from his tent, shot a swift glance up and down the stream, and laughed.

Thesiger's heart contracted.

"Where are the men?"

"They should be eight miles from here." The biologist's brows lifted a little. "To-night they'll be forty, to-morrow night eighty—we won't need them for a few days. They're off, on leave, to their own village."

"Why?"

"Better have your breakfast; I'm not taking any."

"Why?" faltered the younger man again.

"Tut, tut; don't pretend that you've forgotten so soon. Eat, man, you'll need it. I wish I could. This is the day—our day!"

Thesiger's hand shook as he swallowed his coffee. Silence closed in, and there came over him the crepitant hush of the jungle. Presently Jennison began to talk.

"I'm not a bit anxious, and, by the way, here's that document I promised you. We're rather alone, aren't we? Do you ever feel as if that"—he motioned toward the forest—"was palpitating with types of life on which centuries have made no impression? Some people get the sense of antiquity from ruins. I get it from the jungle—one jungle under this one—and another again under that—and the whole place stuffed full of things that crawl and waddle and jump and fly—all existing on a sort of fecund rottenness."

"You expect me to do this ghastly thing?"

"Don't put it that way"—Jennison's voice took on an injured tone—"after I've got the whole thing arranged. We're going to get that orang now. I've been making friends with him for the past week, and he eats out of my hand. In fact, he's what I would have been if I hadn't moved on—and I think he knows it. And—oh, I've got your revolver. You won't need it."

Thesiger's lips were dry. The inevitableness of the thing took him in an inexorable grip. That Jennison had gone mad was without question, and it was a mania that revolved round the fixed idea that he must have five more working years of life in which to unearth his great secret. There was no avenue of escape, and, taxing his mind to the uttermost, it dawned on Thesiger that the way through was the way out. He scanned Jennison's scrawny neck, and reflected that a new gland might indeed pull him through. It was the terrific directness, the primordial sincerity of the thing that appalled him.

"And if I don't do this?" he said slowly.

"Then I'll have to do it myself."

The surgeon's hair bristled on his head.

"Come on."

WHAT followed was a nightmare in which the younger man took a mesmerized part. Across the river they found the orang, a hairy giant of a beast which, at sight of Jennison, made a deep grunting sound and allowed him to approach within arm's reach. Used as he now was to the sights of the jungle, Thesiger experienced a sense of hideous unreality when the lianas parted and this half-human thing emerged. It seemed to link them both with every nameless mystery that lurked in these untrodden depths. There was a vivid picture of a great skull, sharply arched and hairless brows, a vast, deep chest, and long, pendent arms. Then Jennison put his revolver against the broad back and fired.

An orang-utan with a broken spinal column is not a pretty thing—at least, so Thesiger maintains; but the point that Jennison made was that he knew of no other way in which the brute could be brought back alive to camp. The boatmen, one and all, had declined the job. That was how it came that a few moments later the big carcass lay helpless in the bottom of the canoe, while the vicious black eyes stared up unwinking as though demanding to know why truce had been so foully broken.

But Jennison only leaned forward and laid his thin hand on the big, heaving throat.

"Mine," he said triumphantly; "mine!" Then, looking hard at Thesiger, "I've your word of honor that you'll see this thing through?"

Three hours later the younger man came unsteadily to the water's edge and began to wash. His cheeks were gray, and dark shadows had broadened under his eyes. Jennison lay in his tent, entirely conscious, a smile on his white face; and a quarter of a mile down the river the crocodiles were tugging at the orang. Whatever else might materialize, Jennison's reason was saved. Thesiger dwelt on this—fastened on it—as the one stable thing in the universe.

In the days of convalescence, Thesiger felt more than ever the influence of the dark and breathless solitude round him—as though huge, invisible lips were sucking him into its noisome recesses. Jennison apparently was conscious of nothing but a supreme gratitude. He was sure of his five years now.

The boatmen returned at the end of the week, and with them the camp renewed its normal aspect. In another ten days the patient was on his feet, regarding the forest with a new delight. During this latter period he unfolded to Thesiger a mind of profound insight, but tinted with that sardonic interpretation which had done so much to conceal the profundity of the man's knowledge.

"And now, just how do you feel?" asked Thesiger, a month later.

"Too well, quite to explain—and I hear better. I'm conscious now of sounds that don't reach you at all." Jennison glanced across the river. "There's something moving just out of sight over there. You can't hear it?"

"No; nothing."

"It's odd, but I seem rather to feel sound than to hear it. It's a consciousness of movement elsewhere. And I have more taste when I eat—it's rather childlike and nice." He smiled contentedly. "Look across the river now—that's what I meant."

Thesiger looked. A great ape had come out—just as one had come some weeks before. The surgeon strained his ears, but could detect no sound. He glanced curiously at his companion.

"Anything else?"

"Not much, except that I wake up with all my faculties alert, and that"—he hesitated a little—"I'm losing the taste for tobacco."

"Then what has happened is that you have got hold of a remarkable gland, or, rather, it's got hold of you. These things are all evidence of rejuvenation. How did the jungle strike you just now?"

"It didn't strike me at all; there's nothing wonderful about it."

While Jennison said this, he was leaning forward, his knees doubled up nearly to his chin, his long arms locked round them. Thesiger noted this attitude—a new one—and felt a vague sense of discomfort. Scrutinizing his patient's face, he observed that the pallor had disappeared, that the eyes were large and bright, that the flesh round the scar on his neck seemed fuller and firmer. His endurance, too, was vastly increased. He had acquired a new agility in the forest, with which Thesiger found it increasingly difficult to keep pace. But why now, for the first time in his life, should he find nothing wonderful in the jungle?

"I don't quite understand."

"What do you expect to find? A hotel?" The older man's lids narrowed a little. "What's in your mind?" he demanded suddenly—then, abruptly, "About me?"

"Nothing—except that you're a marvel—and, of course you know, I've kept notes of your case. It'll make a bit of a stir."

Jennison remained squatting, his head on one side, listening to mysterious messages that came, it seemed, from all around, messages indistinguishable to his companion. His nostrils were slightly dilated, and Thesiger saw new muscles ripple on his shoulder where the wide-necked shirt fell away from the white skin. He had been apparently reborn. He glanced up with an expression that was almost malevolent.

"That theory of mine—forget it."

"Which one?"

"About instinct, and the possibility of its being transplanted. I've dropped it. I—I"—his voice faltered a little—"I wouldn't be here now if there were anything in it." He moved restlessly. "I wouldn't, would I?"

Thesiger paused, for he had reason to pause, and the voice came in stridently.

"Why in hell don't you say I wouldn't?"

"Of course not!" The young man shot this out with extreme emphasis. "And," he added, "neither would I."

Jennison chuckled far down in his throat.

"I'm going to bed. No, I won't. You go." He got up and scattered the fire, so that in a moment there was only the lambent light of moon and stars that hung luminous over this outpost of science. "That's better. We don't want fire a night like this." He stood mountainously, while Thesiger began to shiver. "Good-night, old chap. Thanks to you, I feel like—like a young gorilla."

It was this jockeying round some stupendous but, so far, elusive possibility that, coupled with other moments no less poignantly suggestive, gradually lifted a curtain in Thesiger's brain and gave him glimpses of a stifling horror that seemed to be gradually enveloping his companion. As Jennison's bodily strength increased, the thing grew more definite till, on a night of utter blackness, when the surrounding jungle was nothing but a great, soft purple wall, he glided off without offering a word of explanation and disappeared in the darkness. Next morning, rising at dawn, Thesiger found him stretched on the floor of his tent in the deep slumber of exhaustion, one hand grasping a ripe coconut. Now, Thesiger knew that the nearest coconut palms were seven miles away.

TWO weeks later, Jennison broke a long silence. He had been squatting in the same fashion, unconsciously caressing his neck—where lay the red seat of his new vitality—when he looked up with an expression in which appeal and command were strangely mingled. He had let his hair grow, and it waved in thick folds over his brows. Suddenly Thesiger realized that this man was reverting to his primordial type.

"We'll dress for dinner to-night—the first time in fifteen months!"

Thesiger started. In each tent was a tin box, carefully sealed, with the attire they would don if by chance they stumbled on civilization in the jungle.

"I knew an American geologist once," rumbled the voice, now deep and strong, "who dressed for dinner every night—even in the Arizona desert. He said it took him back to Philadelphia and New York. I want to go back to Piccadilly this evening." He swayed a little, with a rhythmical motion, and his arms stiffened, while into his eyes came something that was almost a petition. It was as though he felt himself

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

slipping—slipping, and called on Thesiger to cooperate in any possible means of salvation. The other man nodded.

"Good idea! We've been a bit casual of late." Then, glancing at the massive shoulders, he marveled mutely at his own calmness. "You'd better order dinner," he added.

Jennison moved off and began to talk to the cook, then on to his own tent, shortly reappearing in a fury. He thrust himself into a coat that was now much too small for him and split down the back. His collars would not meet, and this angered him still more.

"Look!" he sputtered. "I'll kill that damned tailor when I get back!"

Thesiger made a gesture.

"It's only a tribute to the success of my operation."

The last word had a curiously sobering effect. When, a little later, Jennison sat down, he was normal, and ate with a certain stiff deliberation. It was over the coffee that he drifted into a mental calm, out of which he surveyed his companion.

"That operation," he began, "it's just a question whether—" He broke off, his face suddenly blank, then, leaning forward on the creaking camp-table, "Look here, Thesiger; you've got to promise me something."

Thesiger played with his cup.

"What?"

"That operation—the possible effect of it—mustn't go too far. Just now, I know I'm on the ragged edge. Wait a minute."

He moved off into his tent, and, returning, put a half-ripe coconut on his plate.

"Where did it come from?"

"Don't you know?"

"Only that I found it beside me when I woke up the other morning. Good God! Don't you understand?"

"No," protested Thesiger shakily.

"That's a lie. You're afraid to say so. Now, listen! Things are turning green with me—and when things are all green—you can guess the rest. Understand? They must never get as green as that. You know the way out. You'll take it—won't you?—and let nothing prevent you—nothing whatever. Do it in your own way. I won't know anything about it; but, by God, *some* part of me will come back to say, 'Thank you.' Trouble with me is that I'm running away from myself—from this—" He touched his crumpled shirt. "I'm trying to hang on to it because it's one of the definite things that the world has evolved in the last ten centuries."

His great hairy hands—and with a shudder he noted how hairy they had grown—smoothed down the white linen. The other man had pictured the wearing of these shirts at the table of the administrator of some remote district. Jennison had forgotten all about that. Nor did he make any further reference to the future which began to close in on these two with reiterant and appalling suggestiveness. When he finally put down his cup, the thing cracked in his fingers. At the tinkle of china—for Jennison never could abide drinking from metal—he looked straight in Thesiger's face with a smile of infinite pathos.

"Those five years," he murmured; "I don't want them now."

SOON after this, the crew of boatmen departed one night without a word of explanation. There was not even the splash of a paddle as the silent flotilla moved up the river. Thesiger, scanning the deserted camp in the thick gray mist of morning, knew instinctively why this thing had happened. In those black skulls lay a nameless instinct as sharp as his own observation. They knew why—and he knew why—and it was without doubt that Jennison, too, knew why; but the latter only laughed, and barked over his shoulder that now they had the place to themselves.

That day, in between times, Thesiger went at his notes. The objective side of it all was plain enough, but he had not yet seen Jennison in the act of relapsing into or emerging from that swimming abyss which part of the man was now exploring. As to the biological aspect of it, Thesiger felt as if a hole had been kicked in a wall which nature had built to screen from human observation certain things hardly fit to be seen, much less recorded. It was while he was pondering over this at the door of his tent that he saw something move at the edge of the clear spot across the river, and perceived that it was Jennison.

He stood there, this man of science, one forearm extended against a tree-trunk, just as the young orang had stood weeks before.

Thesiger's throat grew dry as he stared, for in the branches above something else moved—a great, hairy form, half masked in the exotic growth. Death, it seemed, lurked overhead. Into his tense brain flashed the thought that perhaps, after all, this was the way of mercy, the best way out of a road that led grimly to that which was worse than annihilation. So he stifled an involuntary shout. In the same moment, the hairy form leaned over and threw something down. Thesiger whipped out his binoculars. Jennison had caught the thing, and was beginning to eat.

He came into camp that night with an armful of orchids, a great, bearded faun, in whose eyes gleamed a wild light. Half his clothes were gone, and his body was covered with the stings of insects, of which he seemed oblivious. Thesiger, watching him, tried to catch his glance—but failed. There appeared to be no rest for this man—if he were a man—who paced constantly up and down the river-bank, halting now and then, as though he were in communication with the jungle. Presently he achieved a lucid interval of sanity. The light died in his eyes, and he turned with the face of one above whose head the waves of all the world are closing.

"Listen—you! I've been in hell. I'm afraid to go back—I won't go back. I saw you just now looking at me. That orang was the mate of the one I killed. She wants me. Can you think of a man with four degrees to his name being wanted by a female orang? I can't. But it's true! She's been following me for days—with offerings. If I hadn't taken them, she'd have killed me."

He sat down, and, rocking his body to and fro, went on with a hoarse, wild weariness that matched his shaggy hair and matted beard.

"Every now and then I seem to step into a pool of clear, cold water and recover myself. I'm in one now. I pass through that—they're getting smaller all the time—then everything gets hot and moist and green. I have memories of men who wear evening clothes and boiled shirts—but they're only memories. They're crowded out by other things. Do you understand? The jungle, the stinking jungle, is waiting for me now. God, Thesiger, you won't let me go? You gave me something a while since—now you must take it back—and quickly. I'll be gibbering at you in another three hours if you don't."

He held out imploring hands, and, even as he spoke, seemed to slip back. Thesiger got up unsteadily, with terrific visions of what awaited this product of civilization, this evidence that his own red fingers had dabbled in that which had so profound a potency. He glanced up, and there, on the edge of the clearing, a black-brown spot against the green, sat the female orang, waiting—waiting. When he spoke, it was not his own voice.

"Let's have some dinner." Then, slowly, "Stay where you are."

Jennison shivered a little, but did not stir. A few minutes later he occupied his own chair and looked across the unsteady table.

"Eat, man; you'll need it," he said in an extraordinary tone.

THEN came the hour in which the jungle found speech. Through the surrounding gloom drifted a multitude of voices far and near that seemed to Thesiger to protest against this thing he proposed to do. The jungle wanted its own; the horny-backed beetle, and the python that draped its lazy loops in the darkness, each wanted him. Thesiger yielded to the conviction. He glanced at Jennison. That brain which had registered so many extraordinary impressions must now remain an undeveloped negative. From the edge of the clearing came a short, barking cough that carried a note of savage impatience. Jennison's hairy bride was shaking a giant fern.

"The pool of clear water is getting shallower," said the deep voice slowly. "I'm nearly out of it."

"Coffee?" Thesiger could not look up.

"Of course." Then, significantly, "I never wanted it so much before."

Thesiger rose and, with his back turned, stood for a moment beside the fire. Jennison did not even glance round, but sat staring at the river. Two tiny specks of light had appeared in his eyes. A moment later, he lifted the strong black draft.

Across the cup he sent his companion one long look in which relief, courage and farewell were magnificently mingled. It suggested, also, that the region he was now about to explore would be found less thrilling than the one from which he turned away. He seemed, as well, to dally with this last moment, to play with it in a sort of lingering affection. It was only when the noise at

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

the edge of the clearing grew louder that his expression changed.

"Send all my notes and specimens to Marnier—and—thank you——"

Then he drained the cup.

A fortnight later, Thesiger was on his way down the river from the settlement higher up, whither he had fled to try and get a grip on things once more. He had done with the jungle. In the big dugout was also a wandering prospector, journeying seaward. Thesiger felt like keeping close to this stranger, and welcomed the suggestion that they should travel together.

The black water bore the boat swiftly on past a remembered point, and a little clearing came in view.

"By George!" said the other man. "See that cross. Any one buried there?"

Thesiger did not look up.

"Yes," he answered slowly; "the bravest man I ever knew."

He fell into a profound meditation, and went in pursuit of something that haunted his brain. Somewhere, he felt assured, this thing had been spoken of.

Presently it came to him, half veiled in the mist of memory:

*"Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"*

Then, as the clearing slipped silently out of view, he felt suddenly and unaccountably younger.

**Another unique jungle story by Alan Sullivan, "The Spirit of the Man," will appear in June Everybody's—out May 15th.**

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## A Flash of Gold

*The Great Human Story of a Woman*

### By Francis R. Bellamy

OF HIS novel, the author says: *"From those mysterious tides of emotion which underlie our lives, making mock of our wisdom and learning, there rises now and then a fine, high-crested wave. And on it rides a tragic soul, destined to laughter and tears and the angusih of the passionate drama. Intense in an instant, melting at a glance, carrying with them all the witchery of the passionate heart—of such are the Nancy Van Wycks of the world."*

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June *EVERYBODY'S*—out May 15th.

*Introducing another New Author—*

# The Bad News

### *A Writer for the Films Shows That Movie Stars Not Only Find Romance and Adventure on the Screen but Sometimes Live It*

### By Basil Dickey

BARBARA DEAN, idol of a million picture fans, swung her long gray roadster out of the rough, sandy by-road, over which she had been traveling for the past mile, and onto a smooth, glistening turnpike that stretched away invitingly between green fields. With a little gasp of delight she straightened her shoulders and glanced quickly up and down the road. There was no one in sight in either direction and, smiling mischievously, she leaned back against the cushions and stepped on the gas. The car leaped forward like a live thing. Her eye strayed to the speedometer. Thirty — thirty-five — forty—forty-five! The white telephone-poles beside the road were streaming by so fast fast they seemed almost to touch each other. Fifty-five—sixty! A khaki-clad figure stepped from behind a clump of bushes, stood an instant in the center of the road and let fall a white handkerchief. Five hundred yards ahead a second figure in khaki caught the signal and pressed the spring of a stop-watch.

"Sixty-eight," muttered the officer, as the gray streak cut the chalk line marked in the road. "And a woman! 'S too fast." And he dragged a motor-cycle from its concealment in the bushes. A moment later the deep-throated roar of the big motor, dying rapidly away in the distance, was replaced by the savage bark of the pursuer.

"Slow down, lady," said Officer Kernan, as he drew alongside Barbara's car and waved her to the side of the road. She brought the car to a stop and turned in her seat, smiling prettily. Kernan, astride his machine and with his feet on the ground, was engaged in making a note of the license-number on the rear of the car.

"I'm so glad you happened along," Barbara said. Kernan grunted and pocketed his book. "Yes," she went on; "because there is something the matter with this car. When I press down on the accelerator, it seems to stick, and I can't make it come up again. Now, you look as though you knew all about cars. I'm sure you could fix it in a minute."

"Drive straight ahead and take the first left-hand turn," said Kernan, buttoning his jacket.

The girl smiled and shook her head.

"I'm Barbara Dean—of the Realist Studios, you know. If you could fix that gas-throttle—" She looked at the officer with her most winning smile and gave a little start. "Oh, did you see my last picture—'The Siren'? You look so much like Tom Lane, who played the lead. Did you ever think of going into the movies, Officer? With your figure and real intelligence——"

"Let's go," said Kernan. "I gotta be gettin' back on the trap."

Barbara looked hurt and disappointed. She let in the clutch and the car moved slowly forward. Kernan rode beside her, his hand resting on the fender.

"Don't let that throttle get stuck again, miss," he advised grimly. "I can do eighty-five with this boat."

For a quarter of a mile they drove in

silence. The girl cast an occasional furtive glance over her shoulder, but always to find her captor with his eyes fixed on the road ahead. As they neared the turn, she made a final effort.

"Are you married, Officer?".

Kernan grunted an affirmative, and she sighed and shook her head.

"I expected you would be," she murmured. "The nicest men always——"

"Turn here," said Kernan, and Barbara took the curve in silence. Half a mile ahead, the village of Lynne, with its clean white streets, dainty shops and rose-covered bungalows, lay smiling in the afternoon sunshine.

The "city hall" at Lynne, in spite of its Spanish architecture, proclaimed itself an American institution, not only by the Stars and Stripes flying over it but by the crowd of men and boys who sat and smoked and gossiped upon the steps or played upon the smooth lawn. The arrival of Kernan with his prisoner caused considerable interest and agitation among this group, because, while the arrest of speeders was common enough in Lynne, the face of Barbara Dean was familiar to every one of them, her name a household word from New England to the Golden Gate. The boys tumbled over each other in their rush to get a "close-up" of their idol, and the loafers upon the steps rose in a body and stood gaping as she came down the walk and entered the building, closely attended by the redoubtable Kernan. She passed through the crowd with downcast eyes. There was no help for her here, and she was reserving her resources and her smiles for the next encounter. Where she had failed with the policeman, she might succeed with the judge.

THE magistrate's court was held in a large room on the first floor of the building. Kernan led the way into the corridor, warned off a number of boys who attempted to follow, and was about to enter the court-room when the door opened and a large red-faced, rather overdressed man came out. With a word of apology he lifted his hat and stepped aside, holding the door open for Barbara to enter. Kernan greeted him with a nod and was about to follow the girl in when the big man stopped him with a touch on the shoulder.

Barbara found herself alone in a long, narrow room, at the farther end of which the judge's bench stood upon a raised platform. A table and a few chairs stood before it, and the rest of the floor was occupied with spectators' seats. A door at the right of the bench was partially open, and Barbara could hear the low murmur of voices—a man and a woman, she decided. She moved quickly down the room until she reached a position from which she commanded a view of the inner chamber. If women proved to be a weakness of the judges, it might help to know it in advance.

She looked into a bare little room, unfurnished except for a plain wooden table and a chair. Seated at the table was a gaunt, gray-haired man. He was writing, and leaning over his shoulder, with a daintily gloved hand resting upon it, was a golden-haired, fashionably dressed woman. The man tore a check from the book in which he was writing and handed it to her.

"It comes high," he said, rising.

"Yes," the woman answered, folding the slip of paper and tucking it into her glove; "but it is the price of silence." And with a little laugh she walked quickly to a door that opened on the corridor and then went out.

The man turned toward the court-room, and Barbara dropped into a chair and was gazing out of a window in her best "wronged heroine" manner when he entered and took his place behind the bench. He put on a pair of spectacles and began running through some papers that lay before him. Apparently he had not seen the girl. She rose and came forward, timidly.

"Are you the magistrate?" she asked.

He raised his eyes from the paper in his hand and looked down at her over his glasses.

"I am Judge Garvin," he said. "What can I do for you?"

"I am Barbara Dean," she answered, and waited for the effect. If Judge Garvin had ever heard of Barbara Dean, there was nothing in his face or manner to indicate it. He bowed gravely and awaited further explanation of her presence.

Barbara pouted, glanced quickly over her shoulder toward the door and began on a different tack. She "registered" injured dignity.

"Your Honor, one of your officers—" She was interrupted by the entrance of

Kernan, who strode quickly down the room and took his place beside her, before the bench.

A look of understanding came over the face of the judge.

"Your prisoner, Kernan?" he asked.

"Yes, yer Honor."

Judge Garvin dragged a heavy book before him, dipped a pen in the ink and looked down at Barbara.

"Name again, please?"

"Barbara Dean—Realist Studios, Los Angeles," she answered.

The magistrate wrote rapidly in the book and looked up.

"You are employed there?" he asked.

The girl bit her lip angrily. Kernan supplied the information, grinning.

"Movie actress, Judge."

The judge made a further entry in the book and turned to the officer, asking a question merely by raising his eyebrows.

"Sixty-eight miles an hour through the Duncannon trap," said Kernan. Barbara sent him a murderous glance from the corners of her eyes. Judge Garvin frowned down upon her.

"Have you anything to add to the testimony of this officer?"

She stepped close to the bench and looked up into the eyes of the judge. Then she smiled.

"I'm glad he brought me to your court," she said, "because you look intelligent and—and—kind. The great trouble with our police is lack of judgment. I explained to this officer that the gas-throttle on my car—" She hesitated, and the judge interrupted dryly:

"You are not under oath, Miss Dean. At the same time, it will be as well to confine your testimony to facts. You are about to accuse yourself of operating an unmanageable motor-vehicle—a more serious offense than speeding."

Barbara bit her lip; then, shrugging her shoulders, she put her hand into the little gold-mesh bag which dangled from her wrist and drew forth a roll of bills of formidable proportions.

"All right, Judge—I'm guilty. Slip me the bad news."

Judge Garvin looked from the pretty, defiant face of the prisoner to the bundle of bank-notes in her hand.

"Your attitude, Miss Dean, and the amount of money that you display lead me to believe that a fine would make no lasting impression upon you. The 'bad news,' as you so aptly phrase it, is ten days' confinement in jail."

"Oh, but you can't do that!" cried Barbara.

"My dear young woman, I have done it," returned the judge. "Put her away, Kernan," he added, turning to the policeman.

PHIDIAS PERKINS, "Old Phid," as he was called in Lynne, had been jailer so long that it had become a habit. He had turned his keys on all sorts and conditions of prisoners in his many years of service—murderers and vagrants, highwaymen and plain "drunk and disorderlies," and they all looked much alike to him. He could not, however, suppress a little gasp of astonishment when the officer turned Barbara over to him.

"Barbara Dean!" he said, and unconsciously his hand strayed to the few gray threads of hair that adorned his head in a vain effort to make them cover the wide expanse of baldness. He hitched up his belt, from which hung a big bunch of keys and an ancient army revolver that had not been loaded for many years.

"What in tarnation are you doin' here?" he asked, when Kernan had departed, leaving them alone in the little office of the jail.

"Ten days," said Barbara shortly.

"Yeah—that's what Kernan said. But what for?"

Here, at least, was a sympathetic listener—the first she had met since coming in contact with the majesty of the law. The frown left her face, and she turned upon Phid the dazzling smile that had twice failed her in the past hour.

"Speeding," she said. "It's all perfectly ridiculous!" She stepped close to him and let her tiny hand rest upon his arm. "I want you to do something for me. You look intelligent and kind. Please telephone to the Realist Studios and——"

"Ain't no 'phone in the jail, miss," the jailer interrupted. "Shucks! Ten days ain't long," he went on. "Come on now, an' I'll show you yer room."

"But you're not going to put me in a cell!" cried Barbara.

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

"Got to," he replied; "but it's all right, ma'am. Ladies' Department. You won't be with no other prisoners. We ain't had no ladies here for quite a spell now. Come on; you won't mind it a bit when you're used to it." And in spite of further protests, he led the way into the cell-block, a long, narrow room with half a dozen iron-doored cells along one side, two of which were occupied. A door at the further end of the room, marked "Women's Section," stood partially open. As the jailer led the way toward this door, a little dark-faced man with black, beadlike eyes and glistening white teeth grinned at the girl from cell number four. She noticed that the hands which grasped the bars were long and thin, with the tapering fingers of a musician. His grin widened as she came nearer.

"Hey, Five!" he called out suddenly. "Jail ain't so bad. Look who's here!"

A face appeared at the door of number five—the face of a young man with gray, serious eyes and a kindly smile. He looked gravely at Barbara for a moment, bowed and returned into the cell beyond her range of vision. She stood staring for a moment after he had gone, then, turning to the jailer,

"What did *he* do?" she asked, indicating cell five. "That man doesn't belong in jail."

"Contempt o' court," answered Phid, throwing open the door at the end of the room and motioning for her to enter. "T'other's a plain hobo—no visible means," he added, with a nod toward the grinning face in number four.

The "Ladies' Department" was similar to that occupied by the male malefactors except that there were only two cells, and these were a trifle larger than those in the main section of the jail. The furnishings were the same, consisting of an iron cot, folded against the wall, a wash-stand with a graniteware pitcher and bowl upon it, and a wooden stool.

Phidias indicated a push-button on the wall.

"That rings in my house across the road. If you want anything, ring, an' the old lady'll come over."

"I want writing-paper and a pen and ink right now," Barbara said. "If I can't telephone, I suppose I may write some letters—and what I'll say about Judge Garvin and that odious Kernan——"

"There now," interrupted the jailer; "don't you go gettin' excited. Ten days ain't long. I'll get you the paper and stuff."

HE WENT out, and Barbara dragged the stool to the wall, stepped up on it and looked out of the little barred window. The jail backed upon a narrow court, or alley, beyond which a high board fence surrounded a piece of vacant property. Seated along the top of this fence were twenty or thirty small boys, while a group of little girls, unable to climb to this eminence, stood in the court below. As Barbara's face appeared at her window, a shout went up all along the line of the fence.

"There she is, fellers! Oh, you Barbara Dean!"

"Oh, my gosh! Ain't she a peach?"

The ovation was cut short by the appearance of Old Phid in the alley, carrying the writing-material that Barbara had asked for.

"Clear out o' this now!" he shouted. "This ain't no nickelodeon. If you want to see this here lady, go down to the Alcazar an' pay yer money, like you should." And having dispersed her admirers, he returned to the building and appeared a moment later at Barbara's door.

"Here ye are, ma'am," he said, handing her the paper and ink and beginning to fumble with his keys.

"Please don't lock the door," the girl said. "I don't think I could stand it if the door were locked."

Phid scratched his head.

"It ain't regular, ma'am, leavin' cells unlocked, but if ye're fidgety about it, maybe I could make an exception in your case. I don't reckon you're goin' to run away. I'll leave it unlocked, but don't you dast come out." He started for the door, but she stopped him with a quick exclamation of alarm.

"Wait, please, Mr. Turnkey! There isn't any light in this place."

"Nope—no lights in the cells. Lights in the corridor shines through." Already the sun had dropped below the ridge of hills to the west of the town, and the gloom of twilight was settling upon the room. Barbara caught Phid's sleeve as he again started to go.

"Listen to me," she said. "I'm being as nice as I can about this thing. I've been bullied by that policeman and humiliated by the judge, and I haven't exhibited a bit of the temperament my director accuses me of having; but if you leave me in this dungeon without a light, I'll stand at that window and scream until every man, woman and child in the village comes down here to find out what's the matter—and then I'll tell 'em." And, releasing her hold upon his arm, she stepped up on the stool beside the window.

"You win, lady—don't holler!" the jailer cried in alarm. "I'll get a lamp."

He hurried out of the room, and the girl turned quickly to the window. In the fading light she saw a lone admirer, a boy of ten or twelve, seated upon the fence.

"Will you send a telegram for me, young man?" she called softly. The boy leaped down from the fence and ran beneath her window.

"Will I?" he answered. "Why, I'd do yer sentence for you if they'd let me."

"Those are the first kind words I've heard to-day. Wait just a minute." And, jumping down, she took a piece of paper and wrote rapidly, kneeling upon the floor and using the stool as a desk.

TOM HADDON, PUBLICITY DEPT.,
REALIST STUDIOS, LOS ANGELES:
Jailed at Lynne for speeding. Don't try to get me out. Great press stuff. Hold your department ready for dope I send to-morrow.
BARBARA.

Hastily wrapping a bill about the message, she once more mounted upon the stool and tossed it to the boy waiting below.

"Run, sonny, and keep the change," she called softly, and watched him disappear in the gathering darkness.

From the corridor came the sound of voices raised in angry argument. A steel door clanged and the voice of Old Phid came to her, high-pitched and indignant.

"I don't give a durn what I promised yer. It's the only lamp in the jail, and if that woman in there starts hollerin', she'll have the whole town down here, and they'll most likely pull the place down to get her out. Now, you shut up or you won't get no supper."

He stumped into Barbara's cell a moment later carrying a small kerosene-lamp, which he placed upon the stand and lighted.

"I hope it wasn't too much trouble," she said.

Phid grunted and walked to the door.

"The old lady'll bring you some grub," he said, and went out.

Barbara quickly cleared the stand for a desk, spread her paper upon it and took up the pen.

After a little thought, she wrote at the top of a sheet—"The Bad News."

THE village of Lynne goes to bed at half-past ten. The lights in the little bungalows wink out one by one. The southbound express screams a warning and rattles over the two grade-crossings, after which there is silence except for the occasional toot of a motor-horn on the state road half a mile away, and in the vicinity of the jail, where Old Phid snores in the office, taking his forty winks before making his eleven-o'-clock round and retiring to his house across the way.

The light-and-power plant is owned and operated by the community, and a wise and thrifty village council has ordained that when there is a moon there is no need of street-lamps. As the periods at which the lights are shut off are determined from the calendar rather than from existing conditions, the sudden arrival of clouds leaves the village streets as dark as they are silent—so dark that, even had any one been awake, no eye could have followed the course of the dapper little man who came quickly down the street and stopped outside the jail, listening to the musical slumbers of Old Phid.

Apparently satisfied with what he heard, he entered the alley and walked rapidly toward the faint illumination which marked the only lighted window in the row of cells, his rubber-soled tennis-sneakers making no sound on the pavement of the court. After a moment he found a pebble and tossed it through the lighted window. There was a stifled scream from within, and then a face appeared, staring down at him through the bars. At the same time, the bank of clouds which had obscured the moon and upset the calculations of the village council opened, and the moonlight, falling through, revealed to the astonished intruder what Tom Haddon had described in a recent press story as "the million-dollar face."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed the little man. "You—you're Barbara Dean!"

"What if I am?" the girl answered. "That doesn't excuse the bombardment. Or is it a serenade?"

"I'm sorry," he replied. "It was your light that misled me. He said that——"

"Who said?"

"Jim—er—Mr. Darnton, editor of the Lynne *Daily News*. He said that he'd have a light in his cell so I'd know which one it was. I'm a reporter, and——"

"You're a reporter, and you didn't know I had been arrested? You are as uncomplimentary as the judge. Every one else in town knows it, Mr.——"

"Slade," the young man said, bowing. "Johnny Slade." He was a pleasant-faced youngster with a bright, boyish smile. "I've been out of town—that's why I didn't know," he went on. "You see, we published a story in the *News* implicating Judge Garvin with the election-frauds. Jim's been arrested—sentenced for contempt of court, and they're looking for me."

He smiled up at her as he talked, shifting his feet occasionally as though aware that the tennis-sneakers struck a jarring note in his otherwise irreproachable attire.

"Gee! I'm sorry our shop is out of business, Miss Dean. I'd have given you a story that would have been copied in every paper in the country. I'd have——"

"I'm sure you would," Barbara interrupted; "but if you are going to do something for Mr. Darnton, don't you think you had better be about it? You said they were looking for you, and I know there are four empty cells in here."

Slade looked at his watch and whistled softly.

"Lord, yes!" he said. "It's a quarter after eleven, and I've got to be—" He broke off suddenly, looking along the wall with a puzzled expression, "How am I going to find him?" he said. "He was to have had a light."

"His window is the fifth to the left, not counting mine," the girl answered, and added: "Tall, nice-looking, with gray eyes and brown hair. About thirty years old. Light-gray suit and black tie. Is that the one?"

"That's Jim," the reporter replied eagerly; "that's my chief. The best newspaper man in the state, if he is the editor of a dinky little sheet like the *News*.

"If he is a good newspaper man, why did he publish a story about Judge Garvin that he can't prove?"

"That's just it—that's the trouble," Slade replied. "We had the goods on Garvin, all right. Joe Santos, a gang leader from Los Angeles, got a thousand bucks for bringing some of his thugs up here to intimidate the voters. The money was passed by 'Big Ed' Smiley, the county boss, but Joe has a letter of instructions in the judge's writing."

"But if you can prove this—" the girl began.

"We can't. My chief got hold of the gansgster, got the whole story. Santos promised to squeal if given immunity. Jim knew he could fix that with the district attorney, so we let the story go. Before it was off the press ten minutes, the Garvin crowd began pulling wires. Our only witness, Joe Santos, disappeared, and Jim Darnton was arrested for contempt of court—" He broke off, looking at his watch. "Excuse me, Miss Dean; I've got to go. It's been wonderful, talking to you all alone this way. I—I've got to go," he finished lamely and turned down the alley, counting the cell windows as he went. The moon, as though assuming the incident closed, slipped under another cloud-bank and the alley became dark as a pocket again.

THE fact that Barbara Dean had achieved fame and fortune while still very young had not made her less curious than other girls. She detested an unfinished story, and, further than this, the momentary glance that she had caught of the young man in cell number five had given her an unexpected thrill—"intrigued her," as her scenario editor would have expressed it. She found herself regretting that she had not asked the reporter whether or not the editor was married.

Pressing her face against the bars, she strained her ears in an effort to hear the voices at the window of Darnton's cell, but only a low murmur came to her, interrupted by the snores of the jailer out in the office. Jumping down from the stool, she opened her cell door and stepped out into the corridor. The ceiling-lights were out, but the door connecting the two sections of the jail was open, and beyond it a yellow streak of light showed that the door to Phid's office was slightly ajar. She moved slowly forward in the darkness until close to the door of cell four and stopped, not wishing to attract the attention of its inmate if he were still awake. From outside, the voice of Slade, the reporter, came to her in low, quick syllables.

"I've located Joe Santos. He's been hiding in a room over Hop Lee's chop-suey joint, the Green Dragon. I can't get to him. Hop Lee claims he's not there, and unless I call in the police——"

"No; that would be fatal." It was the editor speaking and Barbara was conscious of a quick glow of pleasure. His voice was "nice," as she had known it must be. "It's certain that Joe isn't carrying the letter round with him," he continued. "He'll have it locked up somewhere, and if we cause his arrest; he'll deny the whole story." He paused a moment and then asked, "Who is negotiating with Joe—Big Ed Smiley?"

"No; Joe won't do business with Smiley," Slade answered. "Afraid of the double cross. A woman named Vera Wizner, dancing girl from the Hilles Cabaret, was up here this afternoon to see Garvin. She may have got a check for Joe. Anyhow, she is to meet Joe at Hop Lee's place after the show closes—sometime around one o'clock."

At the mention of the woman and the check, Barbara gave a little gasp of comprehension and took a step forward. She remembered instantly the scene in the little room adjoining the court—the passing of the check and the girl's answer to Garvin's protest at the amount: "It is the price of silence." In her excitement at the discovery that she had information possibly of value to the imprisoned editor, she had stepped in front of cell four. A sound as of some one moving inside caused her to step back again to her former position. Slade was speaking again.

"I wish you were out, Jim. I'm sure you could pull this thing through somehow."

"You are doing all that I could do," Darnton answered. "Cut along now and try to get to Joe ahead of this woman. If you make it, tell him that the only way to play safe is to stick to our side. Garvin and Smiley will make him the goat as soon as they see they are cornered. If you can hold things off to-night, I'll get out on some sort of a writ to-morrow. They know that, and are trying to silence Joe and destroy Garvin's letter before it happens." He paused, and added, after a moment, "How much did you tell Miss Dean?"

"Too much," Slade answered. "I always do when they look like that. So long, Jim! I'll get to Joe if I have to kill a couple of chinks."

Barbara heard the creak of the iron cot as Darnton sat down upon it. She could picture to herself his attitude of despair, head drooping, his chin resting on his hands, his eyes closed. Alone in there in the dark, with so much at stake, so much to be done, and helpless, obliged to depend on less capable hands and brains than his own while he sat a prisoner, without friends or sympathy—no; he should, at least, have that.

She moved quickly to the door of his cell. Again there came a slight sound from the darkness of number four; but this time she paid no heed to it.

"Mr. Darnton," she whispered, her face close to the barred door. She could see him, dimly as he rose and came quickly forward.

"Is it Miss Dean?" he asked, peering at her through the bars. "How in the world did you get out here?"

THE sound of a light footstep in the adjoining cell came to her between two snores from the office. She hesitated a moment, then, still in a breathless whisper:

"He—the jailer—didn't lock my cell. I persuaded him not to." Darnton chuckled, and she went on hurriedly: "I've been listening to you and Mr. Slade. I wanted to tell you how sorry I was—am."

"That's splendid of you, Miss Dean! I was feeling mighty blue until you spoke. You've cheered me up immensely."

"If there is anything I can do—" she began.

"Get the keys off Old Phid." The interruption came from the darkness of cell number four. "When he gets goin' like that, you couldn't wake him with a club," the voice continued, "and the keys are all numbered. It's a cinch."

There was a moment's silence; then Darnton spoke.

"Thank you, my friend. That is a very practical suggestion; but I couldn't allow Miss Dean to——"

"Of course I'll do it!" the girl interrupted. "It's the very thing."

"I can't let you get mixed up in this thing," objected Darnton. "Besides, there are no more trains to the city, and——"

"The Jane's boat'll be in Fogan's garage, half a block down the street," said the man in number four.

"Oh, I'm glad to know that!" Barbara said. "I wondered what had become of it."

Darnton ignored the interruption.

"Even if I were out, I could do no more than Slade. The main thing is to get Garvin's letter, and Santos will have that locked in a safe-deposit vault."

"Nix—nix; not Joe," said number four. "If he's got anything locked up, it'll be in the safe at the Green Dragon, Hop Lee's joint. I know the way Joe works."

"Still, I don't see that it matters whether it is in a vault or——"

"Oh, you don't, eh?" the other man cut in. "Well then, listen to me. I can open that old box of Hop Lee's as though it was a can o' sardines." In the pause that followed this assertion, a broken snore from the office echoed through the room. "You gotta work fast," number four went on. "That old boy's gettin' irregular in his music. It's pretty near time for him to wake up."

"Are you, by any chance, the Admirable Crichton?" the editor asked, while Barbara turned and peered into the darkness of the adjoining cell, trying to get a better view of the helpful stranger.

"Admiral nothin'," he answered; "but I'll tell you who I am: I'm Eddie Parsons." He paused to let this sink in, and Barbara smiled, thinking of her own disappointment when her name failed to impress the judge. "Don't know me, eh? All right," he continued; "I'm the guy that did the Barton Trust job in Frisco."

This time he got a gratifying exclamation from both his auditors. The looting of the Barton Trust Company's burglar-proof safes had been on the front page of the papers for more than a week, and the police of half a dozen cities were scouring the state for the man who had accomplished the impossible.

"But what are you doing here—" the editor began.

The other interrupted, coming close to the door of his cell:

"I made a clean getaway and hid out the loot, but the railroads was all watched. So I started doin' a Marathon for the East. I'm picked up here on a hoboin' charge. It's the mercy o' God that Kernan didn't make me from the description. He's a smart cop, if he is doin' traps in a rube town." He paused, and Barbara could see his white teeth gleam in the darkness. "Now, here's the lay," he went on: "Miss Dean gets the keys an' springs us. I can open the garage in about one minute. We go to Hop Lee's an' get the letter. You're much obliged—an' shows it by forgettin' you ever saw me."

"You're wonderful!" the girl exclaimed. "I know you can do it." She was already moving toward the door of the office when Darnton stopped her.

"Just a moment," he said. "I don't want you involved in this, but if you don't mind my driving your car, you could put back the keys, and nobody need suspect——"

Barbara interrupted with an exclamation of dismay.

"And leave me out of the party? Never! Either I'm in this all the way or I wake up Mr. Turnkey and all bets are off."

"That's the spirit!" said the cracksman. "Move fast, kid. The old bird's due to wake up any minute now. I know that tune he plays, by heart."

BARBARA was already through the office door, ignoring another protest from the editor. With fingers that trembled from excitement, she unfastened the keys from the jailer's belt, and in a moment was back before the cells. An instant later she had both doors open, and Parsons led the way to the door of the office, pulling his cap down over his eyes.

"Get the gun," he whispered, as they walked quietly past the sleeping jailer.

"It isn't loaded," the editor answered.

"Hop Lee don't know that," returned the cracksman, with a flash of his white teeth.

Darnton deftly extracted the big gun from the holster, and they passed quickly into the dark street and walked in silence to Fogan's garage. It proved to be an ancient wooden affair, and Parsons had the door open well under the time limit he had set upon himself. The girl stood guard while the two men entered and rolled the car into the street. Then she jumped to her place behind the wheel and pressed her foot on the starter.

"Don't light up till you make the turn," Parsons said, crouching upon the running-board and motioning the editor to the seat beside Barbara. The car moved slowly forward. As it neared the jail, there was a muffled shout from within, the door was flung open, and Old Phid appeared in the lighted doorway He leaned forward, peering into the darkness at the passing car; then his hand went to his mouth and the shrill scream of a police-whistle echoed through the silent streets. Eddie Parsons bent forward and snapped on the lights.

"Let's go," he said. "The only thing that'll help now is speed. Have you got it, sister?"

"Ask Kernan," Barbara answered, stepping hard on the accelerator.

The big machine raced up the grade, took the turn at the state road on two wheels and headed for Los Angeles, thirty miles away, where Johnny Slade, the reporter, faced Hop Lee for the third time that day and demanded Joe Santos.

HOP LEE'S Green Dragon had never been a popular eating-place, even among tourists, proverbially uncritical of the food in Chinese restaurants. It lacked that touch of Oriental mystery which adds zest to the appetite of the true chop-suey lover. A big square room furnished with tables and chairs, stained black in imitation of teakwood. A row of booths along one side, draped with curtains of cheap red calico. A big mechanical piano stood in one corner, and near the door a little counter, behind which Hop Lee stood listening to Johnny Slade's demands, a slightly bored smile on his wrinkled yellow face. They were alone except for Long Sin, a slovenly waiter, gathering dishes from a table across the room.

"Listen, Hop Lee," the reporter said; "I've got to see Joe Santos. I know you've got him in there somewhere," he went on, pointing toward the swinging doors that led to the kitchen

"I have told you—" Hop Lee began, but Johnny cut him short.

"I know what you've told me. Now I'm going to tell you something. I've got friends at police headquarters that would like nothing better than a chance to raid this joint." He pulled out his watch and went on. "I'll give you just three minutes to produce Joe Santos or I call in the bulls."

Hop Lee smiled deprecatingly, displaying a double row of crooked yellow teeth.

"Twice to-day I have told you, Mr. Santos not here," he said, speaking slowly and distinctly. "You come to-morrow—maybe Joe here then." His lips continued to smile, but his little slant eyes flashed a signal to the waiter, Long Sin, who slipped quietly through the swinging doors. The reporter, who had not taken his eyes from the watch, spoke again, trying to put a world of menace into his final bluff.

"You've wasted one minute on that speech—" he began. There was a rush of slippered feet behind him and he whirled round to face an avalanche of Chinamen pouring from the kitchen. Hop Lee came quietly round the counter and dropped a coin in the slot of the electric piano, and Johnny went down, fighting furiously, while the jangling air of a popular jazz melody drowned the noise of the struggle. In less than a minute he was carried, still fighting, through the kitchen doors, and Hop Lee turned to face a tall, yellow-haired girl in a long black cloak and wide drooping hat who entered from the stairs.

"I am Vera Wizner," she said. "I want to see Joe Santos."

Hop Lee bowed.

"Mr. Santos not here yet," he said, glancing at the clock above the counter. "You wait?"

"I'll wait if you'll stop that canned music," the girl answered, and as the Chinaman complied with her request, "I'm earlier than he expected me," she went on, letting her cloak fall back from her shoulders and displaying a black-satin dancing-frock that glittered with tinsel from the very low-cut neck to the equally short skirt. "There's some funny business up at Lynne. The hick editor has busted out of jail, and Garvin's afraid that he'll get to Santos before I do. I just got the 'phone message and beat it down here without even stopping to wipe off the grease-paint."

She seated herself on the edge of a table and lighted a cigarette.

Hop Lee glanced uneasily toward the kitchen.

"If you will wait here," he said, "Joe

come soon. Make your business with him quick. There has been trouble here."

"What kind of trouble?"

"A reporter from that Lynne paper—that bad *News*—make trouble."

"The little guy in the sneakers?" she asked. "'Bad news' is right. He's been trailing round after me for two days."

Hop Lee nodded and pointed toward one of the booths.

"Wait in there," he said. "More trouble may come." And he went into the kitchen.

He found Johnny Slade seated on the floor, bruised and shaken, six Chinese waiters standing in a menacing group round him.

Johnny opened his eyes as Hop Lee entered and spoke with an effort.

"As soon as I get my breath," he said, "I'm going to start a riot in this joint that will bring out the reserves." Then he closed his eyes again.

AND, in the mean time, the three fugitives from the Lynne jail rode in grim silence as the big car raced along the smooth highway. Barbara sat low behind the wheel, her eyes sparkling in the light from the dash. The editor, leaning a little forward, watched the road ahead as the big lights bored a white hole in the darkness. Occasionally he turned to cast a glance of admiration at the driver, and once he spoke as they topped a rise and went roaring down the opposite slope.

"Don't forget the hairpin," he said, and the girl flashed him a grateful smile as she slowed for a wicked double curve at the foot of the hill.

Eddie Parsons crouched on the running-board and watched the speedometer.

"Some boat!" he called to Darnton, as the dial showed seventy-four on a long, sloping up grade. "An' some driver," he added a moment later, as Barbara took the ditch to avoid an unlighted car stalled in the middle of the road, and came out again with hardly a perceptible slackening of speed.

Dimly lighted villages loomed out of the darkness and slipped away behind them. The road widened. Somewhere ahead a big clock began striking twelve and was far behind them at the final stroke. Another long hill and the lights of the city lay below them.

Barbara took her foot from the gas-throttle and let the car roll gently down the sloping hillside. She glanced up at Darnton and smiled.

"We'll be in town in ten minutes," she said. "What do we do then?"

"Whatever we do, Miss Dean, I shall spend the rest of my life being grateful to the gamest, most generous and——"

"Take the first turn to the left after we cross the railroad," Eddie interrupted. "It's darker that way, an' a lot of folks in this burg knows me."

They were running through the suburbs now—wide, clean, well-lighted streets. The car jolted over the tracks and swung into a broad road, darkened by big overhanging trees which lined both sides of the way.

"And what?" asked Barbara, taking up the conversation where Parsons had interrupted it.

Darnton laughed.

"Somehow I've never thought of you as a human being," he said. "Of course I have known you on the screen for a long time, but I have always thought and written of Barbara Dean as I might of Helen of Troy or Joan of Arc. When you walked into the jail to-day——"

"Police station in the next block," Eddie Parson cut in again. "Better turn here. They'll have 'phoned in about the getaway long before now." He looked up at Darnton with a little smile. "Let's don't congratulate each other too soon. This show's just about to begin. Does anybody know whether Joe Santos ever met this dame from the cabaret?"

"Probably not," Darnton answered.

"She's some friend of Boss Smiley's—and of course we don't know whether she got money from Garvin or——"

"Oh, but she did!" Barbara cried. "I saw him give her the check." And she described the scene she had witnessed in the room adjoining the court.

"All right," said the cracksman; "we take a chance that she don't know Joe Santos. We take another chance that Hop Lee ain't there. I try to pass myself off as Joe and get the check from her."

"In other words," said Darnton, smiling, "everything has got to break in our favor."

"Sure—an' if it don't, it's a plain case of stick-up, with you holdin' 'em off while I open the chink's box. Slip me Old Phid's cannon for the first act. I'll hand it back when I tackle the safe. I wish it was loaded," he added, as he took the gun which Darnton handed down to him and thrust it into his pocket.

Under the cracksman's directions, Barbara drove through a series of dark, badly paved streets lined with dingy tenements, and brought the car to a stop half a block from a corner over which a sputtering arc-lamp threw a sickly, intermittent light.

"Better leave the boat here," said Eddie, switching off the lights as he spoke. "The Green Dragon is just round the corner."

HE TOOK the lead as they walked rapidly toward the light at the corner. Barbara, feeling for the first time a touch of fear, placed her hand on Darnton's arm. He leaned down and spoke to her in a voice too low for the ears of their companion.

"I'm thoroughly ashamed of myself for dragging you into this thing, Bar—Miss Dean—and yet I can't help being glad that you are here."

They walked on in silence for a few paces; then she looked up at him, and there was something in her face that neither the handsome Tom Lane, her leading man, nor the entreaties of her director had ever been able to bring there. Her hand tightened on his arm.

"I'm glad, too—Jim," she whispered.

They turned the corner, and Darnton sprang suddenly ahead of the others and intercepted a man who was just turning into a doorway over which a red lantern, with a green dragon painted on its square glass panels, swung and creaked in the breeze. The editor stepped in front of him, blocking the doorway. Parsons put a hand on Barbara's arm and stopped her in the black shadows of the building.

"Well, Joe?" Darnton said.

The other took a step backward, grinning rather foolishly. He was a short, thick, square-shouldered young man, with black hair and bushy eyebrows. His jaw was square and firm, but the dead-white complexion and twitching movements of the hands and lips suggested familiarity with some form of narcotic.

"Hello, Mr. Darnton!" he said. "I wasn't expectin' to find you here."

"Naturally," the editor replied dryly; "or you wouldn't have come." He spoke in low, even tones, his voice just carrying to his companions where they waited in the dark, unseen by Santos. "What you expected," he went on, "was to go up these stairs and collect some more of Garvin and Smiley's dirty money. You let me go to jail for printing the truth in my paper. You double-crossed me and——"

"Why shouldn't I let yer go to jail," Santos cut in, an angry snarl on his lips. "You didn't offer me nothin'."

"I offered you a chance to be a man," Darnton answered, "a chance to break away from a ring of thugs and grafters, a chance to do a decent thing for its own sake and without pay." He stepped forward and looked down into the gangster's face. "And I offered to keep you out of prison—now I'm going to send you there if it's the last thing I ever do."

"If I go, it'll be for croakin' you," Santos snarled, and a gun glinted in the light of the lantern.

Parsons leaped forward and Barbara stifled a scream. Darnton's fist crashed into the thug's face and he fell, a limp bundle, into the arms of Eddie. Barbara ran to Darnton, smothering a frightened sob against his shoulder.

"Let's go away from here, Jim!" she cried. "I didn't know—I didn't think it would be like this."

"Not so loud, lady," Eddie said, dragging the unconscious Santos into the shadows beside the wall. Darnton, with his arm about the girl's shoulder, was endeavoring to comfort her.

"It ain't exactly like a movie, is it?" Parsons went on, stooping to pick up Joe's revolver from the sidewalk and tactfully ignoring the attitude of his companions. "I'll give you this," he said, handing the jailer's empty gun to Darnton. "You don't need a loaded one," he added, smiling and glancing at the shadows where Joe lay. "If you'd been six inches closer to that bird, you'd 'a' knocked his head right off. As it is, he'll sleep for some time. Are we ready?"

Barbara straightened and turned, looking from Darnton to the still form lying beside the wall. Then she turned to Parsons.

"I'm ready," she said, smiling. "I'm afraid I lost my nerve for a minute. What happens next?"

"Good girl!" said Eddie, glancing rapidly up and down the street. There was no one in sight and no sound save the distant whine of a trolley-car and the snap and sputter of an arc-lamp at the corner. "The layout stands as we made it. I go up, an' you folks wait on the first landin'. If Hop Lee ain't there, I try to pass for Joe an' fool the girl outta the check, which is as good as the letter if it's made out to Joe. If the chink is there—or if Vera gives me the glassy stare, I whistle an' you come a-runnin'. Miss Dean can stand guard on the landin' and tip us off if anybody comes in." He stepped into the doorway and turned back, smiling. "Don't forget why we're here. If I whistle, I'll want help bad." He turned and ran lightly up the stairs. Darnton watched him disappear at the top of the first flight and turned to the girl.

"If you could wait in the car, I'd feel a lot better about this affair."

She shook her head emphatically.

"I'm in this to the finish," she said. "You might as well make up your mind to that. Come on," she added; "your cue is liable to come any minute, and we can't leave it all to Eddie, can we?"

"No," he answered; "we can't." And they climbed quickly to the first landing, stopping under the light of a single electric bulb.

EDDIE PARSONS' little eyes made a swift survey of Hop Lee's dining-room, noted that the door to the kitchen was moving slightly, as though some one had just passed through it, and came back to the woman who stood at the entrance to the booth. He closed the door quietly and advanced into the room.

"Vera Wizner?" he asked, stopping a few feet from her, and added, "I'm Joe Santos."

She eyed him doubtfully for a moment, then came forward and seated herself at the table by which he stood.

"Sit down," she said, indicating the chair opposite her. "Have you brought the letter?"

Parsons changed the position of the chair slightly so that he could command a view of the kitchen door and sat down.

"Have you got the jack?" he countered. "I don't let go of the letter till I see the color of Garvin's money."

She drew a folded slip of paper from the bosom of her dress. Parsons leaned eagerly forward, and for a moment his eye left the door. Vera drew back with quick suspicion.

"How do I know you're Santos?" she said.

"Lemme have it," Parsons said, reaching for the check. Hop Lee came quickly through the swinging doors and stopped in his tracks, looking at the pair at the table. He shot a warning glance at Vera and took a cautious step back toward the door. Before he could reach it, Eddie caught the change in the girl's expression and turned swiftly. His right hand, which had not left the pocket of his coat since he entered the room, came out with Joe's gun in it.

"Stick 'em up, chink," he barked savagely, "an' get away from that door!" In three quick strides he was beside the Chinaman, pressing the muzzle of the gun into his ribs. "Face the wall an' don't turn round, or I'll fill you as full of holes as a plate of tripe."

The Chinaman obeyed the command with alacrity, and the cracksman jumped to the kitchen door and, without taking his eyes from Hop Lee, thrust the barrel of his gun through the doorway.

"In there," he called, "the first head that comes through this door'll get blowed off!"

He stepped back, placed two fingers in his mouth and whistled a sharp, clear call.

At the signal, the Wizner girl, who had come to her feet when the gun was drawn, suddenly threw down a chair and made a dash for the door. As she reached it, the editor entered, with Phid's big gun swinging in his hand.

"Sit down," he said, motioning her to a chair. She backed away and dropped into a seat by one of the tables.

"Why—you're the hick—the editor of the *News!*" she said, and made a quick movement to conceal the check which she still held in her hand.

"Give it to me," Darnton said, covering her with the gun.

She laughed and thrust the slip of paper into her dress.

"You wouldn't shoot a woman," she said.

"He wouldn't—but I would," said Eddie, coming up behind her, "an' if you got any doubt about it, just keep that check ten seconds longer."

She turned and looked at him. He was smiling, but it wasn't a pleasant smile, and there was something in the little black eyes that caused her to make up her mind quickly.

"I believe you would," she said, and handed the check to Darnton.

"Smart girl!" said Parsons and, turning to Darnton: "How 'bout it, Jim? Will it do?"

The editor shook his head.

"Not much use—five hundred dollars, payable to cash."

"Only five hundred, eh? Cheap game these politicians play!" Eddie said, and walked to where Hop Lee stood with his face to the wall. "I'm goin' to open your safe. It'll save time if you give me the numbers."

"There is no letter in—" the Chinaman began, but Eddie cut him short.

"I didn't ask what was in it. Gimme the combination—quick!"

HOP LEE hastily muttered the desired information. Parsons moved toward the counter. He stopped and spoke over his shoulder to the Chinaman.

"If you move—if you even look as though you'd like to move, I'll kill you. Get me?"

Hop Lee thrust his face closer to the wall. Eddie passed behind the counter and dropped on his knees before the little iron safe beneath it. He rose up again to speak to Darnton.

"If that Jane starts anythin', you don't need to shoot her—just knock her on the head with the butt o' the gun." He ducked down again and began spinning the combination knob. Hop Lee had not thought it advisable to misinform him as to the numbers. He opened the safe without difficulty and was running through a miscellaneous assortment of bills and papers when the door burst open and Barbara ran in, breathless from her dash up the stairs.

"They're coming!" she gasped. "Judge Garvin and the big, red-faced man that I saw at the court-house!"

"Smiley," Darnton said.

"Never mind—I got it!" Eddie vaulted over the counter with a letter in his hand. "Sit down, you—an' quiet!" he barked at Vera, who had risen with an exclamation of surprise when Barbara entered. He handed the letter to the editor, who gave it one quick, satisfied glance and thrust it in his pocket.

"Now, behind the door here!" Eddie went on, pushing Barbara and Darnton back so that they would be momentarily concealed when the door opened. "Quiet, you two," he added with a savage glance from Vera Wizner to Hop Lee.

The door was flung open, and Big Ed Smiley burst in, closely followed by Judge Garvin. Parsons was behind them in an instant, jamming his gun-barrel into Smiley's back.

"Don't turn round, gents, an' don't stop. Walk right over and line up with your friend Hop Lee. Quick now!" he added, as the judge seemed to hesitate. "We gone too far to stop at a little thing like croakin' a couple of cheap grafters."

"I'll get you for this—whoever you are," Boss Smiley snarled over his shoulder; but both he and Garvin obeyed orders to the letter and lined up beside the Chinaman.

"Now back out slow," said Eddie to his companions, ignoring Smiley's threat. "Don't hurry—easy does it."

"Hands up, everybody!" said a voice behind them, and they turned to face Officer Kernan, with a big army automatic in his hand. "I'll take charge of this party now. Put down those guns."

It was a big moment for Kernan. To have recaptured the three jail-breakers and rescued a judge and a powerful politician in a highly dramatic manner was much—but it was not all. For in the instant that Eddie Parsons turned to face him, the officer had recognized the man that half the detectives in the West were searching for. If he had snapped the handcuffs on his man at once, all might have been well, but Kernan was young—he held his big moment a little too long.

"Do you know who this is?" he said to the judge, who had hurried forward at the sound of his rescuer's voice, followed by Big Ed and Hop Lee. "It's Eddie Parsons—Eddie Parsons, the man that cracked the burglar-proof safes in Frisco. The man that——"

There was a blood-curdling yell from the kitchen, a crash of breaking china, the thud of running feet. The reporter had recovered his breath and was making good his threat to start a riot.

Every one turned. Even Kernan allowed his eyes to shift for an instant, and in that instant the little cracksman was on him like a tiger. With a wrench of his long, powerful fingers he tore the pistol from the policeman's hand, and, with the skill of a professional wrestler, tripped him across his knee and threw him heavily to the floor. Then he jumped back to the doorway, his little black eyes snapping like a rat's, his white teeth gleaming in a wicked smile.

Johnny Slade burst from the kitchen, shaking off his pursuers, who stopped in a huddled, frightened group in the doorway.

"Jim—Miss Dean!" he gasped.

"Friend of yours?" asked Eddie. "Stay where you are, Kernan," he added, as that unfortunate officer tried to get to his feet.

"Yes—it's all right, Eddie," the editor said. "Keep 'em covered. Now, Johnny," he went on, "come here—don't ask questions. Listen; here is the Garvin letter——"

"Gosh! How did you——"

"Don't interrupt—put it in your pocket." The reporter obeyed. "The *News* goes to press in the morning with that letter, a photograph, you understand, on the front page. If you've nothing else for the paper, frame it in the center of a white sheet. Got that? Now, listen again. This is Eddie Parsons." He nodded toward the cracksman. "Whatever else you may hear about him, he's the best friend I've got. He's going out of here with you while I hold this door. Give him all the money you've got on you and——"

"Take my car," Barbara interrupted. "Eddie knows where it is—and take him as far as he wants to go."

"How are you and Jim goin' to get out of this?" Eddie asked.

"Never mind that," Darnton answered. "Give me that gun and hustle."

"Let's go," said Johnny Slade, starting for the stairs. Parsons passed the gun to Darnton."

"So long, Jim!" he said. "Watch Kernan. The rest of the bunch are scared stiff. Good-night, Miss Dean. Nice party we had."

"If you ever want a job in the movies—" she began, but he was already running down the stairs.

"If you let that man go, I'll send you up for compounding a felony," Judge Garvin exclaimed savagely.

"When to-day's paper comes out," the editor returned, "the testimony of you and your crowd won't be worth a nickel in any court in the country. Now, everybody quiet, please, until those boys get a little start. They won't need much."

He glanced at the clock above the counter and stood waiting, his gun covering Kernan. Barbara came close, placed her hand on his arm and smiled up at him. In the silence that followed there came through the open door the whine of a self-starter, then the throb of a motor, which died rapidly away. Vera Wizner sank back in her chair with a long sigh of relief.

"Gosh, I'm glad that guy's gone!" she said. "He was due to kill some of us."

Kernan got to his feet, muttering an oath.

The editor stepped to him and handed him the pistol.

"You'll find Joe Santos lying down in front," he said. "Better look after him. I promised to send him to the penitentiary, and I wouldn't like him to die from exposure. Now," he went on, turning to the judge, "if you have no objection to offer, Miss Dean and I will return to our cells."

He held out his arm to Barbara and turned toward the door. Kernan stepped in front of them, blocking the way.

"I don't know how deep you are in this thing, Kernan," the editor said, "but you're going to need a friend in court. You'd better stand out of the way."

Kernan hesitated a moment, but as both the judge and Smiley remained silent, he stepped aside, pocketing his gun.

"Good-night, your Honor," said Barbara, with perhaps unnecessary emphasis on the last word. "We'll see you in the morning."

BUT in this she was mistaken, for when the now famous "graft" edition of the *Daily News* appeared upon the streets of Lynne, Judge Garvin and Big Ed Smiley were on board a little steamer, far down the coast toward old Mexico.

As the editor had anticipated, the reporter had little time for news-gathering after taking Eddie Parsons to a safe hiding-place. By working until close to dawn, however, Johnny Slade had produced a fairly respectable sheet, and in the column headed "Doings in the Movie World" was a little item which he published without consulting his chief. It read,

> It is reported upon trustworthy authority that Barbara Dean, of the Realist Pictures Corporation, is about to leave that organization because of another engagement.

The "trustworthy authority" was, of course, Eddie Parsons.

*The Story of a Struggle to Be Decent—*
*A Story That Contains a Challenge*

# GODLESS VALLEY

*In a Community Grown Callous to God, to Morals, to Conventions, Two Youngsters—a Boy and a Girl—Struggle to Keep Their Heads Above the Muck and Mire*

## By Honoré Willsie

*Author of "Still Jim," "The Enchanted Cañon," etc.*

Illustrations by Ernest Fuhr

*Begin this serial with any installment. The story is here up to this issue.*

BY THE time he was twenty-two, Douglas Spencer believed he had discovered the remedy for the ailment that was slowly eating away the moral tissue of the community in which he had been born and bred and was keeping Judith from him. The folks of Lost Chief Valley, high up in the Wyoming Rockies, were descendants of God-fearing, religiously orthodox pioneers from New England, and they were for the most part gross materialists. For them, a coyote-proof grave in the burying-ground was the finality of existence.

Not that there were no exceptions to this trend of mind. In Grandma Brown, a kindly old soul, the valley's chief mainstay in its trials and afflictions, the fires of simple faith still flickered, and they burned even more strongly in Peter Knight, the postmaster, in whom a little of the Puritan strain and a good deal of refinement had managed to survive. But such influence as they might exert was more than counterbalanced by the example of the libertine John Spencer, Douglas's father, the frankly atheistic Charleton Falkner, and the lawless Scott Parson, whose energies just now—with Lost Chief's approval, to be sure—were devoted to making life unendurable for a colony of peaceable Mormon settlers in a neighboring valley.

With such men dominating the life of the little settlement, inured to the hard life of horse- and cattle-raising, it was small wonder that the women drank and swore and were sophisticated almost from the cradle. This did not seem right to Douglas. He wanted his people to lead more decent lives; yet how could they, with all spiritual hope taken from them? He could not accept the outworn dogmas of his ancestors' religion, but he longed for some conviction of immortality which he could spread among his neighbors and which he was sure would raise their standard of living.

He was led to this desire chiefly through his love for Judith, the daughter of his father's second wife, Mary. The girl was now twenty, wilful and headstrong by nature, and as expert as the men in handling horses and cattle. She had come under the influence of Inez Rodman, an unrepentant Magdalen, whose religious philosophy was based on worship of beauty, and who had opened Judith's eyes to the utter sordidness of the lives led by the married women of Lost Chief. Therefore the girl would not listen to Douglas's pleadings that she become his wife.

But now the boy thought he had found a way to get at Judith's better nature. That summer, while hunting wild horses with Charleton Falkner, he had come upon a preacher named Fowler, whom Lost Chief had driven from its midst some years before. It would have none of his antiquated theology. Fowler, in discouragement, had given up the ministry and become a sheep-herder. Their meeting gave Douglas an idea. He would get Fowler to return to Lost Chief, build him a chapel on some land he owned, and start a campaign of regeneration. Fowler agreed, and came to the valley in September of that year.

Douglas had warned him that the people would not stand for threats of vengeance and eternal damnation from a merciless God, and asked him to confine his efforts to instilling a conviction of immortality—which he was sure would bring good results, especially to Judith. But the simple-minded man was too old to mend his ways, and his first discourse ended in a riot raised by a resentful element composed of youthful members of the community.

Nevertheless, a considerable number of the older ones were now agreed that a church might work some good in Lost Chief, so the preacher and his patron decided to face the situation and try to brave it out.

But one thing had begun to trouble Douglas. He suspected that Peter Knight wanted to marry Judith. So one afternoon he called on the postmaster and hinted broadly at his fears.

"What are you driving at, Doug?" asked Peter in surprise.

"You are the best friend I have, Peter," replied Douglas, "but I couldn't give Judith up, even to you. It would be like trying to tear the veins out of my body. I couldn't!"

"DOUGLAS," said Peter slowly, "love is the most powerful force in the world. Mind you, I make a sharp distinction between love and lust. Lust can be controlled by any one. Love can be controlled by a man as old as I am. But when love grips a young man, he is powerless to throw it off. What a cur I would be, Douglas, at my age, to refuse to throttle a love that might come to me if it would conflict with a young man—the man I like best in the world."

He paused. Douglas did not stir. Peter lifted his pipe, laid it down and set a match carefully beside it.

"Doug," he said, "my market's made. I sold my birthright for a mess of pottage. Whatever regrets or griefs I may have are my own. Judith is yours, whether she knows it or not. Will you stay for supper?"

He put the pipe in his mouth and lighted it.

"No, thanks, Peter. I must get back to my sky-pilot. You will be at the chapel early on Sunday?"

"Yes. But you'd better let him do the preaching. Have him preach on immortality. You've sort of got the old folks going on that."

Douglas nodded and went out. Twilight was thickening as he trotted slowly along the trail. The floor of the valley swam deep blue before him. A lone coyote wailed beyond the black shadow of an alfalfa stack. A bull bellowed hoarsely. The stars appeared one by one. A sense of the futility and mystery of human longings and griefs lay on Doug's heart.

He saw a light in the cow-shed as he passed his father's house, and he rode the Moose round to the shed door and dismounted. Judith had just finished milking.

"Hello, Doug!"

"Hello, Jude!"

"Coming up to the chapel Sunday, Jude?"

"I'd just as soon."

"Judith, could you care for Peter?"

"Peter! Me? What's struck you, Doug? Peter is as old as dad."

"What difference does that make?"

"It wouldn't make much if I cared," admitted Judith, leaning thoughtfully against the manger.

"But do you care for him? Do you care for anybody, Jude?"

"Not enough to marry. Inez and I will die old maids."

"Inez! I'll bet, if you could get the truth out of Inez, Judith, you'd find her suffering torments right now because she can't marry. No decent man would have her."

"Doug," returned Judith, "if Inez Rodman really loved a man and wanted to marry him, he'd have as much chance as a coyote used to have when Sister was young enough to run them. Only, if Inez ever does love a man, she won't marry him. She'd keep herself a mystery to him. And 'forever would he love and she be fair.' "

"What's that you are quoting?" asked Douglas.

Judith, her eyes filled with a deep light the young man could not interpret, repeated the immortal lines. When she had finished, Douglas sighed.

"It's very beautiful," he said; "but life isn't a procession round a Grecian urn. It's hard riding from start to finish. And it's a poor sport that won't accept that fact and ride according to rules. Marriage is one of the rules. I believe in it."

Judith moved closer to Douglas and put a hand on either shoulder.

"Douglas, do you suppose that if I told you I loved you madly, I couldn't persuade you not to marry me?"

Her touch was flame. Douglas drew a long, uncertain breath.

"If you said that you loved me madly, you could do most anything with me, I guess. The only thing that keeps me steady, I suppose, is knowing that you don't love me."

Judith smiled curiously. Douglas lifted her hands from his shoulders.

"Don't torture me, Jude," he said, and he went out and mounted the Moose.

AND that night, for the first time, hope flared in his heart. Perhaps Judith did care for him; perhaps that curious smile, that light in her eyes told him more than she would concede in words. Yet there was her complete determination not to marry. Did she know how she was torturing him? Would she be repentant if she did know? Could that burning struggle relate to Scott? And so hope fought with despair until he slept from very weariness of thought.

Douglas camped in the log chapel on Saturday night just to make sure that no mischief was done under cover of the darkness. And on Sunday Mr. Fowler preached an uninterrupted sermon. Scott was present, giving apparently undivided attention to the preacher's discourse.

Considered from an entirely detached view-point, the sermon was a thing of exceeding beauty. Inez should have been satisfied. The text was one of the most intriguing in the Bible. "Jesus said, I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more. But ye see me. Because I live, ye shall live also." Around this Mr. Fowler wove picture after picture of passionate faith in a hereafter. He told of the death of his own father, who, with the death-rattle in his throat, had sat erect in his bed, crying, "O Christ, I see your face at last!"

He told of hardened criminals who had heard God's voice in their dreams. He told of children who, like little Samuel, had been called by the Almighty in a voice as articulate as that of their own father's. He told of the authenticity of the Biblical history of Christ and of the scientific explanations of Christ's miracles. He told of the faith of the ancestors of the people of Lost Chief, a faith which had led them across the Atlantic and through those first terrible years on the bleak New England shores. He concluded with a prayer for the return of the sheep to the fold, a prayer delivered with tears pouring down his weather-beaten cheeks.

At the end, he sank into his chair by the table and covered his eyes with his shaking hand. Lost Chief sat silent for a moment; then Grandma Brown said in a quavering voice, "Let us sing 'Rock of Ages.'" But she alone knew the words, and after a single verse she stopped in some embarrassment.

Charleton coughed, yawned and rose. The little congregation followed him out into the yard, where horses and dogs were milling the half-melted snow into yellow muck.

"Well, Grandma," asked Charleton, as he helped the old lady into her saddle, "what did you think of the sermon?"

"A pretty good sermon," replied Grandma. "Made me feel like a girl again."

"My Gawd, Grandma!" exclaimed Charleton. "Do you mean to say that an old Indian fighter like you swallowed that stuff?"

"I was believing that stuff before you were born, Charleton. If Fowler is going to keep this pace up, I'll say I'm sorry I ever called him a sissy. What did you think of it, Peter?"

Peter was leaning thoughtfully against his horse.

"It was all right. Ethics, as such, are too cold to interest most folks. So we sugar-coat 'em with magic and sleight of hand and try to give them authority with a big threat. Then some hard-head like Charleton says, because the sugar-coating is silly, there is nothing to ethics. Which is where he talks like a fool." He whistled to Sister and trotted homeward.

On the next Sunday, in the early-morning hours, after Douglas had returned to his cabin, some one smuggled a skunk into the log chapel, so there was no service that day. On the second Sunday, Inez gave a dance in the afternoon and evening, and only half a dozen of the older people listened to a sermon on the Resurrection. Still another Sunday came, and although there was no counter-attraction, there were no young people in attendance.

The lack of interest that was growing, now that the valley's first curiosity had been satisfied, was more deadly than open warfare. Douglas felt that Scott was at the bottom of the apparent apathy, but he could not be sure. He spent evening after evening sounding Mr. Fowler's mind to its very depths in the endeavor to find in it some angle that could tempt Lost Chief into the log chapel—Lost Chief, but particularly Judith. It was a good mind, that of the preacher, stored with a very fair amount of classical learning and replete with stores of Western adventure. But classical lore had little appeal to modern-minded Lost Chief, and Mr. Fowler's adventures could be capped by any man in the valley It was Mary Spencer who gave Doug an idea.

"Why don't you feed 'em, Doug? Announce a dollar dinner up there next Sunday. Give them a grand feed and then let Mr. Fowler preach."

"I'll make it a venison dinner," said Douglas, grinning. "Will you help?"

"Yes. You supply the food and I'll get the woman to help cook and serve."

AND so, in spite of Mr. Fowler's protest, a venison dinner was announced for Sunday noon and received by the valley in a spirit of hilarious enthusiasm. And it was such a good dinner that, at its close, the guests sat with complete docility through a long sermon. Mr. Fowler had reached the closing prayer when a bull bellowed outside and the door opened, disclosing Elijah Nelson with his horse behind him. The preacher paused.

"Excuse me," said Nelson; "I thought this was just a dinner." He was a big man with a smooth-shaven ruddy face. He went on with a determined thrust to his lower jaw. "I want Scott Parson to come out. I won't disturb the rest of you."

But the rest of them were only too willing to be disturbed, and the congregation emptied itself at once into the yard. Several Mormons were sitting their horses before the line of quivering aspens that bounded the little clearing. A big red bull was tied to the corral fence. Elijah Nelson remained on the door-step.

"Well," he began, "since you are all out here, I'll say to all of you what I rode down here to say to Scott Parson. He and anybody that may be helping him are hereby served notice that they've got to keep out of Mormon Valley. We are decent, God-fearing Americans, and we are not going to stand being robbed any more."

"How do you mean, 'being robbed'?" asked Peter Knight.

"Well, I brought this along as a sample," replied Elijah. "Some five years or so ago I had some cattle grazing on Lost Chief, and somebody ran off a dozen head, this bull among the lot. Anybody that can't do a better job of rebranding than this ought to try another line of business."

There was an interested craning of necks toward the huge brand offered in evidence; then every one looked at Scott. Scott said nothing, and Elijah went on:

"That fellow Parson patrolled Mormon Creek that heads up at Lost Chief Springs all summer. He built a brush dam and threw the water out of our creek into his own ditch whenever he felt like it. I didn't want to start a fight going; that's not a Mormon's business. We are peaceful folks, homesteading the wilderness. It was a wet summer, and we managed to get enough water out of White Horse Creek to take care of us. But right is right and wrong is wrong, and we aren't going to stand that next summer. Last week a coyote was fastened into my chicken-run, and last night a mountain-lion, with a trap hanging to his leg, got into my corral, where I had two colts, and he killed them before I could get out. The trap had Scott Parson's name cut onto it. I don't know who is helping him, if any; but I'm here with my neighbors to serve notice that it's got to stop. I see you've got a preacher here now. I begin to have hopes you may become peaceable yet."

A sudden gust of laughter swept Lost Chief.

"Well, Scott," asked Peter, "what have you got to say?"

"Me?" asked Scott. "I'm not a preacher or a Mormon. I haven't got the gift of gab. Charleton is a good talker; let him say something."

"All right, old trapper," said Charleton, obligingly. He grinned at Inez and began,

"Yet, ah that spring should vanish with the rose,
That youth's sweet-scented manuscript should
close——"

Elijah Nelson interrupted.

"Is this the way you are going to answer a decent protest against injustice?"

"Wait now!" cried Grandma Brown. "Don't get all prodded up. Scott, you give this man a straight answer."

"Very well, Grandma; I'll do that little thing for you," drawled Scott. "Nelson, you and the rest of your Mormons and Jack-Mormons go plumb to hell, but leave my bull behind."

One of Nelson's neighbors rose in his stirrups and shook his fist at Scott.

"You dogy-faced Gentile, I've got you marked! You are the one who ran our cattle off Lost Peak five years ago, and we know who helped you."

"Well, I think you Mormons had better get back to your plural wives!" cried John Spencer. "We've had about enough of this."

"Judith," said Douglas, "you take your mother and go home."

Judith turned bright eyes toward him.

"Think I'm going to run away? No sir!"

Elijah's neighbor laid his gun across his own arm.

"Say that again, Spencer," he suggested "unless you aren't willing to fight for your daughter."

Mr. Fowler sprang up.

"I beg of you all to disperse to your homes and don't desecrate the Sabbath by such a scene as this."

"Oh, don't talk like a fool, Fowler!" exclaimed Grandma Brown.

At this moment, her little grandson came roaring lustily up the trail. He was covered with muck and snow.

"Judith's bull has got away from us kids, and he's headed this way!" he cried.

"What were you doing with him?" shrieked Grandma.

"We was going to bring him up here and put him in the church, like Scott paid us for. And he said——"

But what the child intended to divulge was not known, for there was a bellow from the thicket of blue spruce, and Sioux, with various chains and ropes dangling from his neck and legs, charged into the clearing. There was a sudden wild scattering of human beings. Judith whistled shrilly, but Sioux had been goaded beyond her control.

"Let me get my rope!" she cried.

"Hold up!" shouted Charleton. "Something's going to happen!"

THE Mormon's bull had broken his halter and had turned to meet the oncoming Sioux. Sioux's bloodshot eyes fell on the stranger, and instantly the battle was joined. The snow flew. The buck fence crashed. The bulls bellowed, locked horns, retreated, charged, slipped, fell, rose again with a rapidity only equaled by the ferocity of the attack.

"They'll kill each other if they aren't stopped!" cried Fowler. "Stop them, Douglas! O God, what a place!"

"What a fight, you mean," laughed Charleton. "I put up ten dollars on Sioux."

"Take you," said Scott.

"If Spencer's bull kills mine, he'll pay for it!" cried Nelson.

"If they work into the corral—" shouted Douglas. "Some of you help me put the fence up again and we'll have them corralled!"

"Well, don't stop the fight"—young Jeff gesticulated excitedly—"I'm going to put up ten on Sioux."

"Take you," said Scott.

Nelson's bull ripped Sioux's flank for six inches, and blood spurted to the ground. Both the great heads were indistinguishable masses of blood. Their hot breath hung frozen in the air. The western sun turned all the world beneath the aspens to crimson. The betting became more general and more hectic as the battle waxed more furious, the Mormons backing their bull freely.

Suddenly Sioux freed himself, backed, and charged with the full force of his two thousand pounds. He caught Nelson's bull on the fore shoulder. The visitor slid sideways, stumbled to his knees and rose, shaking the blood from his eyes. He gave a look at Sioux, who was preparing to charge again, and, turning, he fled along the trail toward Scott's ranch, uttering as he went the long-drawn and continuous bellow of the defeated bull.

Douglas, Judith and John Spencer immediately roped Sioux. Scott spurred his horse across the trail and drew his gun.

"Get back!" he said to two of the Mormons. "That's my bull!"

"No gun-play, Scott!" called Peter.

There was a sudden exodus of women and children down the home trail, but Judith continued talking soothingly to her bull.

Scott did not heed the postmaster. He went over to the Mormons.

"You blank blanks have trimmed me out of my year's profit. I'm not going to lose the bull, too."

"Judith Spencer," shouted Elijah Nelson, turning his horse toward Judith and her pet, "is that Scott Parson's bull?"

There was sudden silence, broken only by the distant bellow of the retreating warrior. Judith sat very erect on Buster, her beaver cap on the back of her head, her wide gray eyes brilliant. She looked at Scott. His hard, handsome face was expressionless. Douglas ran across the yard and reached up to tap Elijah Nelson on the chest.

"Don't drag a woman into this, you bastard American, you! I was up there that summer running your cattle, and I lost every one of them, if you want to know, and there was no woman helping me out, either. Now what are you going to do about that?"

Nelson lifted his hand.

"Wait a minute," drawled Charleton. "It sure Gawd is your bull, Nelson. Scott ran it up to Mountain City, rebranded it there and brought it back in the spring."

"Why, you traitor!" roared Scott. "You staged the whole play then, and I'll bet you staged this with your traps."

"I never let a debt go unpaid," chuckled Charleton.

"Aw, come off, Scott!" cried John Spencer. "Give them the bull and send them home. We are sick of your rows in this valley."

Scott forgot that he was guarding the trail. He spurred his horse furiously toward John, flourishing his six-shooter. The two Mormons slipped quickly away.

"If you think you can sacrifice me for Jude, John Spencer—" cried Scott. He got no farther, for Douglas, now on the Moose, cracked him on the right wrist with the butt of his own gun. At the same time, Peter knocked John's arm into the air. Scott's weapon dropped into the snow.

"Now," said Douglas, with his quiet grin, "this venison dinner-party of mine is announced as over. You Mormons take yourselves and your dogs off my place. Frank"—to the sheriff, who had been an amused spectator up to this point—"come over here and soothe Scott. He's a right nervous cow-man to-day. Dad, you take Jude home."

Frank rode slowly over to take Scott's bridle.

"Well," said Peter, "looks like our host wants to get rid of us. Come on, Charleton."

"I'll get you later, Charleton!" shouted Scott.

"But how about—" began Nelson.

Douglas turned in his saddle and faced the older man. His young eyes suddenly looked grim and hard.

"Nelson, you have seen what Lost Chief is like to-day. We have no fear and we have no friends and we have no God. But Lost Chief is ours, and we intend to keep it. No Mormon is welcome. Don't use our trails or our range or our headwaters. Now go!"

"Those are hard words, such as a man can't afford to speak to a neighbor," said Elijah, turning his horse slowly.

Douglas did not reply, and not at all reluctantly the visitors spurred up the drifted trail.

"COME on, Judith!" John nodded to the girl.

"I'm going to stay and doctor Sioux up," she said.

"Go home, Judith," urged Douglas.

"Yes; we'll take care of the bull for you," added Mr. Fowler.

"Nobody can touch him in the state he's in but me. You know that," declared Judith.

"Judith," repeated Douglas, "you go home."

"Why?" demanded the girl.

"You know why, Judith. Go on with dad."

Judith set her lips and slowly, very slowly spurred Buster after John's horse. Not until she was out of ear-shot did Douglas say to Scott:

"Now, Scott, let you and me settle our differences once and for all. You gather up that gun, Mr. Fowler, and we'll go into the cabin where it's warm."

"I'll not go near your house." Scott spoke gruffly.

"Look here, Scott; don't be a grouch. Let's see if we can't get together."

"Get together! Some of this religious stuff, I suppose."

"Religion! No! It's just common sense. What's the use of fighting all the time?"

"I'm through with you and I'm through with Charleton. But you can't drive me out of the valley—see? Lost Chief is as much mine as it is yours. And I'm going to see to it that you and your maverick preacher don't run it."

"Oh, draw it mild, Scott!" protested the sheriff. "Nobody is afraid of your threats."

Douglas, a straight, rather tense figure in the dusk, did not speak for a moment, then he said quietly:

"All right, Scott, I'm through. Get off my place—quick." And he dismounted and unsaddled the Moose.

Scott rode off at a gallop.

"Want any help with the bull, Doug?" asked the sheriff.

"No, thanks. We'll get the lantern and put him in the stable."

"Then I'll be getting home to my chores." And Frank jingled away.

THE two men had little difficulty in leading Sioux into the little new cow-stable. But here all progress ceased. Sioux would not permit them to touch his wounds. After an hour of struggle they left him with feed and water and returned to the cabin. Here they started the fire and sat down to talk the day over.

"Scott means mischief," said the preacher.

"I don't want you to go anywhere without me," said Douglas. "He is plenty smart enough to know that the best way to get me is through you—or Judith."

"Don't worry about me, Douglas. I heard Bryan say once: 'My body is covered with the calluses of defeat. No one can hurt me.' I am like Bryan. No one can hurt me. And I would guess that Judith can look out for herself."

Douglas grunted. The two sat staring at the fire in a silence that was not broken until Judith called from without,

"Douglas, I want to see Sioux!"

Douglas took up the lantern and, followed by Fowler, went out. Judith stood beside Buster.

"You give me the lantern, Doug, and neither of you follow me. I can manage him best alone."

She was not gone long.

"He's not as bad off as I feared. I'll let him feed and rest for another hour; then I'll take him down home, where I can tend to him right."

"Then let's go in out of the cold," suggested Fowler.

When they were established round the stove, Judith asked,

"How did you and Scott get along, Douglas?"

Douglas told her of the conversation. Judith was serious.

"You see, Doug, dad keeps Scott sore all the time about me. I don't think he'd be half so ugly to you if it were not for that."

"Oh, yes, he would," replied Douglas. "Scott and I were born to fight each other. Inez could make Scott behave if she cared anything about it. Scott isn't in love with her, but she has a lot of influence over him, like she had over the other men in this valley."

Judith watched her hunting-boot steam against the hearth.

"She has too much influence over you, Judith," said Mr. Fowler.

"She's my friend," returned Judith briefly.

"Your friend!" cried Fowler. "Your friend! Do you realize what you are saying?"

"Yes; I certainly do, and I don't want a lecture about it, either." Judith sat erect.

Mr. Fowler leaned forward, his eyes glowing with indignation.

"I've swallowed all I can swallow about Inez Rodman. I allowed Douglas to bring her to the table, and I ate with her, though my gorge rose in my throat, because I felt that my only chance to win the confidence of Lost Chief was to countenance for a time that which cannot be countenanced. But I am through. How long do you think you can be a friend to Inez, Judith, and not become like her?"

"Oh, I am so sick of this kind of thing!" Judith cried, jumping to her feet.

"Fowler is dead right, and you know it, Judith," said Douglas.

"You don't dare to say these things to her face!" Judith's eyes were full of the tears of anger.

"I'd just as soon," Douglas grinned.

"I'm going to tell her what I think of her and what she is doing to the youth of Lost Chief," stated Mr. Fowler.

"She's not a bit worse for Lost Chief than Charleton Falkner!" exclaimed Judith. "And Doug's crazy about him."

"I was through with Charleton years ago," retorted Doug.

"He couldn't be as bad as Inez," insisted the preacher. "There is nothing so bad for a community as her kind of a woman."

"That just isn't so, Mr. Fowler," protested Douglas. "Charleton is worse than Inez ever thought of being. All I'm complaining about is her influence on Judith."

"You both talk as if I had no mind of my own," Judith said indignantly. "If you knew the temptations I've withstood, you'd not be so free with your comments about me. And if all I'm going to get when I come up here is criticism, I'm not coming any more. Don't you follow me, Douglas!"

And Judith, in her short khaki skirt, swept out of the cabin with a grace and dignity that would have done credit to a velvet train. The preacher was deeply perturbed. He rose and paced the floor.

"Douglas, I've tried to play this thing your way. But now I am through compromising. There can be no compromise with God. I'm no longer going to keep silence when events like those of this afternoon take place. Undoubtedly my stay in Lost Chief will be short. But while I'm here I am going to stand openly and vehemently for the Ten Commandments."

Douglas tilted his chair back, folded his arms on his chest and dropped his chin.

"Something's wrong with your religion," he said.

"Nothing is wrong with my religion," retorted the preacher. "But Lost Chief is more wrong than most places. As I've said before, it's your New England breed. A man who's come from Puritan stock can't get along without God."

"I get sick of worrying about things!" cried Douglas irritably.

"Do you mean you are sick of the fight—that you are going to let Inez have Judith?"

Douglas straightened up.

"No, by God! Not if I have to shoot Inez! You go ahead and preach your own way. I'll see that you are not hurt."

And this was his last word on the subject that night.

THE next morning, when Douglas went to his father's ranch to begin his day's work, Mary Spencer beckoned him into the kitchen.

"Douglas, I'm worried sick about Judith since you left home. John keeps right after her. He is just as fascinating as he can be. He is deliberately trying to charm her, paying no more attention to me than if I were a patient old cow."

Douglas's lips stiffened.

"How does Jude take it?"

"With a laugh. I don't know anything that she thinks. Oh, why did I ever marry him? Douglas, won't you come home?"

"It would do no good."

"Then talk to Judith."

"No. She's sick of my scolding, and I don't blame her. If I talk to any one, it will be to dad."

But he did not talk to John. A sick sense of the futility of words in the face of Lost Chief's unfettered desires was growing on Douglas day by day. He refrained, too, that week, from asking Mr. Fowler any questions about his Sunday plans. But he was not altogether surprised when he saw the announcement on the post-office door that Mr. Fowler would preach on the topic of the Magdalen.

If the preacher had chosen his subject with the idea of exciting popular interest, his choice was almost perfect. Every soul in Lost Chief was packed into the log chapel long before the services began—everybody, that is, but Inez.

Mr. Fowler never had been more eloquent and never, probably, had preached to a more deeply interested congregation. His sermon was a vitriolic arraignment, thinly disguised by Biblical nomenclature, of Inez Rodman. When he had finished and had seated himself, young Jeff rose slowly to his feet. Douglas, from his usual place in a rear seat, smiled a little. He liked young Jeff, and liked him best when he rose as now to do battle for a friend.

"Fowler," said young Jeff, "I don't like that sermon. We all know who you are driving at, and, as for me, you make me very sore. That's a Lost Chief girl, and no outsider can come in here and insult her."

"Right! Right!" called several men.

"I didn't expect you to like the sermon," said Mr. Fowler. "I'm through saying pleasant things to you folks. You are going to get straight facts from now on."

"That's as it may be. But you keep your tongue off of Lost Chief women."

"I don't know why you get your back up, young Jeff!" cried Grandma Brown. "The people of Lost Chief aren't ignorant. They do what they do because they prefer it that way. They know what the world calls their doings. Why be squeamish when Mr. Fowler comes in here and just repeats the world's attitude on such doings? Inez is the ruination of our young folks, and we all know it."

"That's right!" called Mrs. Falkner, and Mary Spencer added a low: "Yes! Yes!"

"She's better than any man in the room right now!" cried Judith. "If you are going to drive her out, you ought to drive the men out."

"Fine!" called Charleton Falkner.

There was a quick guffaw of laughter, during which John Spencer rose.

"Fowler, I don't want to seem to go against my own son, but I want to say that if you try any more sermons like this one, I'm going to head a committee to run you out of the valley."

"That's a good idea!" exclaimed Scott Parson. "If the preacher says, 'Drive Inez out,' we'll say, 'Out with the preacher!' "

"You're all talking like a parcel of children," said Grandma Brown.

"Come on!" shouted Scott. "The pass is open. Let's send him out now!"

Fowler stood tensely behind the table, pale but calm. Peter Knight spoke for the first time.

"I've got an idea. Let's give the sky-pilot just one more chance. Let's ask him to preach a sermon next Sunday that we can all feel the right kind of an interest in, or else resign himself."

"That's fair enough," said Charleton. "This isn't such bad fun. Why drive him out while the fun lasts? How about it, John?"

"Fair enough," agreed John.

"Nothing doing!" cried Scott Parson.

"Now, Scott," warned Charleton amicably, "you run the bull business and you'll have your hands full. We old regulars will handle the preacher."

"Hah!" sniffed Grandma Brown sarcastically. "Old regulars! Don't any of you old regulars forget that Douglas Spencer has grown up and that his brand-mark is the same as his grandfather's."

Nobody spoke for a moment; then Peter asked,

"How about it, Fowler?"

"I'll agree to nothing. I am through compromising."

"You're foolish!" exclaimed the postmaster. "But we're going to give you one more chance, anyhow. You must try to be good."

And the meeting broke up with a considerable amount of laughter. Douglas and Mr. Fowler did not discuss the situation that night. The older man seemed very tired, and Doug, with a welling of pity in his throat, persuaded him to go to bed early. Nor did Doug speak of the matter later. He was beginning to feel a deep-seated conviction that the religious issue of the situation was entirely beyond his own directing. He would let the old preacher choose his own sermons. But Peter did his best to persuade Mr. Fowler to go back to the subject of immortality. How successful he was may be judged from the fact that on Friday the post-office door announced that the Sunday's sermon would be on the sins of Lost Chief. Beneath this announcement was another to the effect that Jimmy Day was giving an open dance on Saturday night in the post-office hall.

AT FIRST, Douglas hesitated about going to the ball. He did not want to leave the preacher alone at night. But when he found that his father was going, and Judith and Scott, he persuaded himself that the dance was his first duty. So, with many admonitions and warnings, he left the old preacher with his Bible open before him and arrived at the hall soon after nine. The dance was in full swing, with all the Lost Chief familiars present by ten o'clock, except Scott, who did not appear until after eleven. Douglas, dancing with Judith, saw him come in, ruddy from his long ride in the cold wind.

"I thought Scott was to bring you to the dance," he said. "I wonder what makes him so late."

Judith glanced toward the stove, where Scott stood warming his hands.

"You ought to be uneasy whenever you are away from the preacher, Doug, and you haven't got Scott located."

"I am," replied Douglas. "But I thought he'd be with you. Do you think he's been up to mischief this evening? Has he hinted to you?"

"No, he hasn't; but that doesn't indicate anything."

Douglas felt profoundly uneasy, and after the dance with Judith was ended he decided to go home. Peter saw him drawing on his mackinaw and, leaving the phonograph, he followed Doug out into the cold starlight.

"You and Judith quarreled?" he asked casually.

"No," replied Douglas. "I don't like Scott's coming in so late. I'm uneasy about my little old sky-pilot. Guess I'd better get home." He paused with his hand on the pommel of his saddle, looking up toward Dead Line Peak. Then he gave a hoarse cry. "Peter! There's a fire up there!"

HE LEAPED into the saddle and drove the spurs home. As the Moose broke into a gallop, he heard the phonograph cease and a moment later there were shouts on the trail behind him.

"Keep going, old trapper; we're coming!" roared Jimmy Day.

Douglas did not reply. He saw the flames rise higher as he covered the miles. He heard Mary Spencer call to him as he passed the old corral. But a sense of impending calamity drove him like a black-snake whip. Up the rising trail, between drifted fences, up and up, with the Moose groaning for breath, until the quivering aspens were silhouetted clearly against the crimson glow. He halted in the little clearing, with a confusion of voices behind him, with dogs barking, horses groaning and squealing, and coyotes shrieking excitedly from the blue-spruce thicket behind the corral.

The cabin and the chapel were in full flame. Douglas dismounted and shouted for the preacher; then he ran round the burning buildings, through the corral and into the sheds. There were no horses left and no traces of Mr. Fowler.

"He must 'ave run for help!" cried Jimmy Day.

"He's probably down to the old ranch!" called Charleton. "Did you stop by, John?"

"No," answered John. "Where's Scott?"

No one knew. Judith, with Whoop-la's bridle-rein in her hand, ran to Douglas.

"Look here, Douglas; you think before you do anything desperate."

Doug did not seem to hear her. He turned toward the crowd of riders.

"Are you folks going to help me find Fowler, or are you with Scott Parson in this?"

"How do you know the old devil didn't set fire to it himself?" demanded John, who had been drinking, as his thick voice attested.

"He's probably gone to Inez for shelter," suggested Charleton.

Douglas swung himself up on the Moose. His lips were twisted bitterly.

"Glad to help you personally out any way, Doug!" cried Jimmy Day. "But you'd better let the sky-pilot go. You've been the church-buildingest damn fool in the Rockies."

Douglas stood in the stirrups, facing his old friends and neighbors. But words failed him. He spurred the Moose out onto the trail.

"Hold on, Doug!" shouted Peter. "You haven't heard from me yet." He urged his horse up beside the Moose.

"I'll help you, Douglas!" shrieked Judith. "Tell me what you want done."

"You'll not do anything of the kind, miss!" shouted John. "I'll show you!"

Douglas did not reply or look back, and in a few moments the voices had receded to a murmur behind him.

"What are you going to do, Doug?" asked Peter.

"I'm going to put a gun to Scott's head and make him tell me where the preacher is. After that, I'll see."

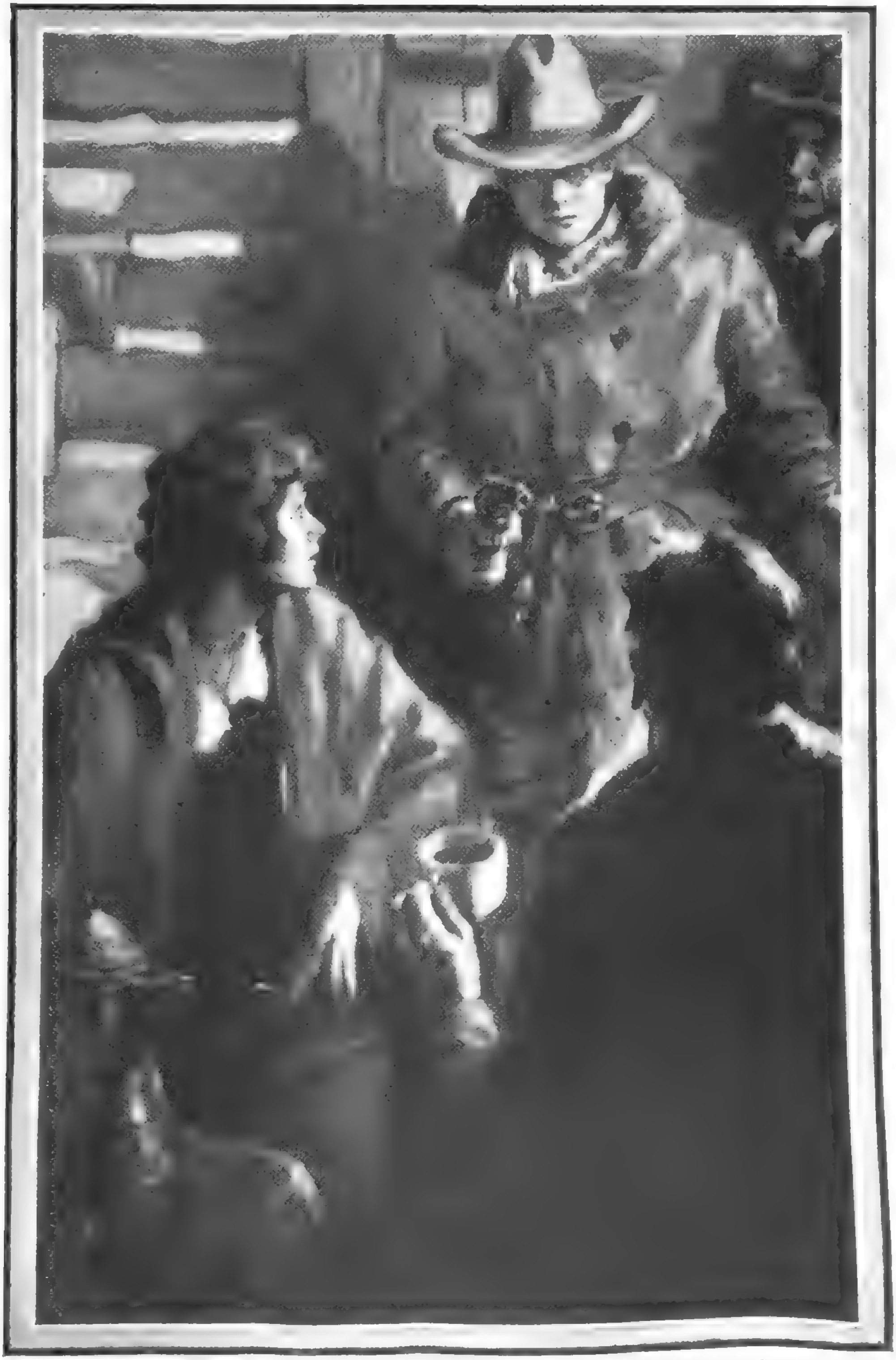
"Where are you going to look for him?"

"At Inez's place first."

"He probably wants you to do just that thing," said Peter. "Are you prepared for a nasty fight?"

"I want a nasty fight."

They made the remainder of the ride to the Rodman ranch in silence. There was a light in the kitchen. Douglas banged on the door and strode in, followed by Peter. Inez and Scott were sitting before the stove, both with cups of coffee steaming in their hands. Doug's gun covered Scott.



Doug's gun covered Scott. "Where's Fowler?" he asked. "I'm not dry-nursing that old maverick. That's your job, Doug."

"Where's Fowler?" he asked.

"I'm not dry-nursing that old maverick. That's your job, Doug."

"Where's Fowler?" repeated Douglas.

"Do you suppose if I knew I'd tell you?"

"Where did you see him last?"

"Now, what is the great idea, Doug? Something gone wrong with your religious round-up?"

"I don't know who you get to do your dirty work, Scott," said Douglas. "You've probably got your tracks pretty well covered as far as the burning of the cabins goes. I'll let Frank Day sleuth on that. But the preacher is my job. And I know as well as if you'd confessed that you were running him before you came to the dance to-night. Where is he?"

"You must think Scott is a fool, Douglas!" exclaimed Inez.

"I do in lots of ways," admitted Douglas coolly.

"Well, don't start a row here." Inez tossed her head. "I warn you I'll take Scott's part if you do."

"Why will you?" demanded Peter suddenly.

"I suppose you didn't hear the sermon Douglas got preached up in his log chapel last Sunday?" asked Inez bitterly.

"Yes; I heard it," replied Peter.

"You were pleased with it, I suppose," said Inez, her eyes suddenly heavy, as if with tears.

Peter watched Doug's tense finger on the trigger of his six-shooter.

"In one way I was, in another not. I guess the truth is not always wise. You've made a mess of your life, like the rest of us, Inez."

Inez glanced at Peter's thin, sallow face.

"And I've thought of you as a friend!" she cried, panting. "I've thought of you—God, how haven't I thought of you! I could kill you, Peter, with my bare hands!"

She made a quick, catlike lunge for him. Peter grasped her wrists. She struggled, throwing herself against him with such violence that he stumbled against Douglas. Doug's gun went off, and a bullet tore through the sleeve of Scott's leather coat. Scott rolled to the floor, grasped Douglas's legs and threw him. Douglas dropped his gun, and, as he fell, he pinioned both of Scott's arms. The kitchen table went over. Inez struggled in Peter's grip. Peter gave her an enigmatic grin.

"Be still, Inez! You can't be my friend and Scott's, too."

"You don't want me for a friend! Don't be a liar!" panted Inez. Then she burst into tears and leaned quietly against him.

SCOTT and Douglas struggled without a word. Peter watched them with gleaming eyes. Suddenly he saw Douglas drive his knee violently into Scott's groin. Scott groaned and went limp. Douglas got to his knees and tied Scott's hands together with his own neckerchief. Then he dragged Scott to a sitting posture against the wall and again covered him with the gun. Slowly the agony receded from Scott's face.

"Where's the preacher?" demanded Douglas. Scott did not answer. "I'm going to stay here till dawn," said Doug. "If you don't see fit to answer by then, you'll start on the hunt with me with the gun in your back. You and Inez better sit down, Peter. Look's like we'd be here quite a while."

Peter, both of Inez's wrists in one of his long, powerful hands, put fresh wood on the fire and sat down, pulling Inez into a chair against his. Inez, breathing unevenly, did not speak. How long a time went by no one knew before there came the galloping of a horse, and a moment later Mary Spencer burst into the kitchen. She was wind-blown and wild-eyed. Her coat was open. Her head was bare.

"Is Judith here?" she cried.

"No!" exclaimed Inez. "What's happened?"

"What I always knew would happen!" Mary began to cry, hysterically.

Douglas tore down the roller-towel and tossed it to Peter.

"Tie up Scott's ankles! Inez won't bother."

Inez, indeed, was giving no heed to the men. She ran over to Mary.

"For heaven's sake, what's happened?"

Mary suddenly spoke calmly.

"Up at the fire, she insisted she was going out to find the preacher. John wouldn't let her for a long time. Then he gave in and followed her down the trail. I stayed up at the fire for quite a while with the others; then I went home. I noticed, when I turned old Beauty into the corral, that there were no horses. That surprised me, because Jude told me she'd only stay out an hour or so. Then I hurried into the house. The living-room table had been tipped over and the chairs were all pulled round. I telephoned all round, but nobody had seen her. You folks didn't answer the 'phone; so I came here."

Douglas started for the door.

"Where are you going?" asked Peter.

"After Judith."

"What about Scott and the preacher?"

Douglas's lips were white, his eyes burning.

"What do I care about them when Judith is in question?"

"You go ahead, Doug!" cried Inez. "Don't wait for anything. Judith's been talking about running away for years, but she never planned to go off in the winter—I can tell you that."

"John had been drinking, you must remember," half sobbed Mary. "He's always so ugly then."

Douglas rushed out of the door. Peter followed him.

"Where are you going, Doug?"

"I'm going up to the old ranch and see if I can pick up their trail. I need another horse. My corral is cleaned out, and dad's is, too. But I— Oh, Peter!" Douglas's voice broke.

"Keep your nerve up, Douglas. I've got a couple of horses in fair condition down at my place. We'll ride there after we look over things at your father's ranch."

They hardly had cleared the corral when Mary overtook them. She was still crying, but except for her sobs they rode in a heavy silence to the ranch-house. While Mary cooked a hasty breakfast and wrapped up bacon, flour and coffee, the two men made their blanket-rolls and prepared for a hard ride.

"She'd make for Mountain City, I'm sure," said Mary. "She's been so uneasy ever since Doug left home, always saying a girl had no chance to make anything of herself here. It would be exactly like her to lose her temper and start off, hard pelt, on that hundred-mile ride with no preparations at all."

"That's not what worries me," said Peter. "It's John when he's two-thirds drunk."

"It's daylight!" exclaimed Douglas. "Let's get started, Peter."

They rode at a trot onto the familiar trail, now marked and remarked by the many riders who had passed over it the night before. It was to be a clear day. But in the increasing light white clouds could be seen whirling from the crest of Lost Chief.

"Lost Chief is making snow, but we won't get it before evening," said Peter, as they dismounted at the post-office corral. "Now, we'll just outfit for a couple of days. I'm believing we'll overtake one or both before night; but you can't tell. If Jude was crazy enough to run away in zero-weather, she's crazy enough to have taken any kind of wild risk and to be paying for it."

THE sun was just over the Indian range when, each leading a pack-horse, they crossed Lost Chief Creek and started up the long slope toward the pass. Here the wind was rising, and dry snow sifted constantly across the trail, obliterating completely any traces of hoof-marks that might have been there. It was not until they were half-way to the summit, pushing between high jade-green walls where the wind was excluded, that Douglas suddenly pulled up. The snow was level and hard packed. There were hoof- and wheel-marks, leading south. Friday's mail-stage. A number of hoof-marks leading north. The two men dismounted and studied these.

"Here!" exclaimed Doug, at last. "Four horses in a walk up to this point. Here they break into a trot. Come on, Peter!"

"Easy, Doug! Don't kill the horses. It's only a guess you are following."

Douglas grunted impatiently and set his horse, Justus, to the trot. At the summit, still following trail, they pulled up to breathe the horses, then plunged downward. Half through the afternoon they followed the hoof-marks. The biting wind rose and the sun warmed their backs as they crested the ridges. The wind fell and the sun darkened as they dropped into the valleys. Eagles on the hunt hung watchfully in the sky. Coyotes now and again sneaked across the trail before them. The two men threshed their arms across their chests or dropped their aching feet from the stirrups, and still the hoof-marks of four horses led on before them.

Their shadows had grown long and blue-black on the trail when suddenly Douglas

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

pulled Justus up and Peter pushed up beside him. About a quarter of a mile farther on lay the half-way house. They were crossing a broad, flat valley, into which the trail dipped lazily. Just before them, the hoof-marks of two horses led sharply to the left and disappeared. Some one had fallen. There was a confusion of hoofs; then a two-horse trail led on toward the house. Without a word they put their mounts to a gallop that did not ease until they pulled in at the little log corral of the half-way house. They pushed open the door to the house. John lay on the floor by the stove. He raised a haggard face.

"Where's Judith?" demanded Douglas.

"I don't know. She turned up the cañon below here."

Douglas muttered something. Peter laid a hand on his arm.

"Keep your head, Doug! What's the story, John?"

John groaned.

"I was drunk. She went down to the house to get some warmer things while she hunted the preacher. I followed her. The house was warm, and it made me drunker. I don't remember what I said, but she came at me like a wildcat. She said she was through, and now was as good a time as any to leave. Then she ran out. After a minute it came to me that she was carrying out her old threat to run away. I went out and found she'd turned my horses loose. It took me some time to catch them. I never sighted Jude until after dawn, when she reached the summit, and I never caught up with her until we reached this valley. I kept yelling at her, trying to explain. She didn't even turn her head till I caught up with her. Then she turned that devil of a Whoop-la on me. He reared and bit and got me down. Then she rode off up the cañon. My leg is broken, and I came on up here."

Douglas stood clenching and unclenching his gloved hands. Suddenly he turned on his heel.

"Come on, Peter!"

"We can't leave your father this way, Doug."

"Come on, I tell you!" Douglas's low voice was as hard as his eyes.

"Wait!" cried Peter.

"Wait! Wait! While Judith freezes to death?" cried Douglas.

"She's not going to freeze to death. She's too mad," groaned John.

"An hour or so won't make any difference," said Peter. "I guess Jude had this thing planned out."

"Planned!" shouted Douglas. "She's gone off her head with disgust and anger, and she don't care where she goes as long as she's rid of—of him. I know Jude."

"You don't know Jude," contradicted Peter. "Help me to lift John to the bunk. He's got to be taken care of."

Douglas gave Peter a long stare of surprise and resentment. Then, without a word, he rushed out of the cabin.

The sun was very low. Douglas took the lead-rope of his pack-horse, mounted Justus and put both horses to the gallop back to the point where Judith had left the main trail. Here he turned and urged the animals over the tracks, which were rapidly being drifted with snow.

THE whole world was white. Lifting from the valley to the right, little hills rolled one into the other like foaming billows. The tracks led, lifting rapidly, along the base of these into a grove of Lebanon cedars, gnarled and wind-twisted. Among the trees there was little snow, but Douglas picked up the trail when the trees opened out upon a wide mesa, where the snow had taken on the saffron tints of the evening sky. The mesa ended abruptly in a drifted mountain, opalescent pink from its foot to its cone-shaped head. The snow on the mesa was not deep, and Douglas realized that Judith had followed an old trapper's trail that worked south toward Lost Chief peak.

By the time he reached the foot of the mountain it was so dark that he barely could discern that Judith had circled to the right, round the base of the peak. There would be a moon a little later. Douglas dismounted in the shelter of a huge rock, cut down a small cedar and made himself a fire and some coffee. And he fed the horses.

He sat for an hour over the fire, waiting for the moon. He was not conscious of weariness. His whole mind was focused on finding Judith, on finding her and somehow ending the intolerable uncertainty and longing which he had endured for so many years.

The threatened snow thus far had held off. If the clear weather would hold for another twelve hours, he was sure that he could overtake her. He was impatient of delay and watched for the moon. Shortly after seven o'clock it sailed over the mountain, flooding the world with a light so intense and pure that the unbelievable colors of the daytime returned like prismatic ghosts.

Douglas mounted and slowly and carefully followed the trail round the mountain. He found the spot where Judith had made a fire. He paused over a drift where one of her horses had floundered. He urged his tired horses to a trot where Judith had followed a beaten coyote-trail along a hidden brook. Hours of this, and then a thickening cloud across the moon and a sudden stinging blast of snow in his face. Douglas stopped, appalled.

Then he pushed on as long as he could distinguish the trail. At last, with a groan, he pulled up and beat about until he found a clump of service bushes. Beside these he unsaddled the horses and hobbled them and made himself a shelter with a blanket tied over the shrubs. He built a fire before his shelter, then crept beneath it, rolled in more blankets and after a time dropped miles deep into slumber.

WHEN he awoke it was gray dawn, and he was snug beneath the foot of snow that had blown over his bed-covering. He crawled out stiffly and made a fire. Then he fed the horses and ate his breakfast.

Lost Chief Range lay to the left. To the right lay a broad mesa, cut by impassable cañons. Far to the south and to the right lifted Black Devil range, forming with Lost Chief range a deep valley, the valley in which Elijah Nelson had settled. From this direction the valley was almost inaccessible—almost, but not quite. Just below the crest of Black Devil Peak lay a pass. If this could be crossed, one dropped southward into a cup-shaped valley called Johnson's Basin. Beyond this basin another pass into sheep country, thence still south to the railroad and the whole wide world.

Black Devil Pass was used in summer, but only by seasoned hunters and cattlemen. In winter, the pass was closed by snow and ice. Yet Douglas was convinced that Judith was attempting the perilous passage. Even had she by now cooled down, she would not turn back. Pride, resentment, restlessness and that virile love of adventure, which only increased as she grew older, would urge her on and on. And to cross Black Devil Pass in winter was a feat which even Charleton would refuse to undertake. Yet he did not believe that Judith could attempt such a journey without carefully outfitting. And where could she have done this? Had she foreseen her flight and cached food and fodder? Douglas shrugged this suggestion aside as highly improbable. Perhaps she had gone into Mormon Valley for supplies. It was possible to reach Black Devil Pass from the upper end of Mormon Valley, possible in summer, at least. Possible also to reach the pass by swinging round to the right of the Black Devil range.

Douglas, with a grim tightening of his lips, looked over his supplies—bacon, coffee, flour, matches—enough for a week if eked out by cottontails and porcupines. But the horses had only a day's fodder. He remade the pack, mounted and pushed on through the snows, which grew deeper as the elevation increased.

On either hand the two ranges flung up mountain beyond mountain in shades of jade creviced by deep-blue snow. The tiny, weary cavalcade wound on and on with not a trace of Judith to lighten the way. It was noon when Douglas reached the forest which choked the end of the Mormon Valley. He knew the spot. Nature first had covered the floor of the passage with boulders. Between the boulders she had planted pine trees. The pine had grown thick and tall and had waxed old and fallen, and other pines had grown above the dead tree-trunks. In summer, if extreme care and patience were used, a horse could be led through this chaos. But in winter, deep-blanketed with snow——

Douglas drew up before the pines and dismounted. The snow was waist-deep. Very slowly he began to pick a winding, intricate path between the trees. He fell many times, but he finally emerged into the smoother floor of the valley. Then he turned and followed his own trail back, kicking and pounding the snow to make better footing for the horses. He took Justus's reins and led him forward.

Horses hate the snow. These shied and balked, stood trembling and uncertain, shook their heads and kicked, and Justus nipped at Doug's shoulder with ugly yellow teeth. But he pulled them on and by mid-afternoon they were in the open valley, with snow not above the animals' knees. Gradually the Mormons' buck fences appeared, and, just at dusk, a twinkling light.

DOUGLAS rode up to the cabin and, dismounting, knocked at the door. It was opened by Elijah Nelson.

"Good-evening," said Douglas.

"Good-evening," returned the Mormon.

"Did Judith Spencer come through this way?"

Nelson shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't care to hold converse with any one from Lost Chief."

"I'm not trying to hold converse with you. My sister has run away from home. I've lost her trail and I'm scared about her. I won't stop a minute if you'll just answer my question."

A woman pushed up beside Elijah.

"Who is it, pa? For pity's sake, young man, come in! It's a fearful cold night."

Elijah stood back and Douglas strode into the kitchen. Several children were sitting round the supper-table. Nelson repeated Douglas's query to his wife, adding,

"He's the young man who brought the preacher into Lost Chief and who called me a 'bastard American.'"

The woman stared at Douglas. He was haggard and unshaven. Nevertheless, standing with his broad shoulders back, his blue eyes wide and steady, yet full of a consuming anxiety, his youth was very appealing.

"Have you been out long?" she asked.

"Since Sunday dawn."

"She's your sister, you say?"

Douglas looked down at the woman. She could not have been much over thirty, and her brown eyes were kindly.

"She's only a foster-sister," he replied, his low voice a little husky. "I—I—" He hesitated, then gave way for a moment. "If I'd stayed at home, as her mother wanted me to, instead of bringing the preacher in, it never would have happened. Religion! Look what it's brought to me and Judith!"

"Religion never brought anything but good to any one," said Elijah Nelson. "It's religion now that makes me allow you within my doors."

Douglas gave the Mormon a quick glance. Somewhere back of his anxiety it occurred to him that he would like to ask this man some of the questions that had troubled him for years. But now he said urgently to the woman,

"If Judith was here, for God's sake tell me!"

The woman turned to Elijah.

"Tell him, pa."

Elijah scratched his head, eying Douglas keenly the while.

"Peter Knight told me something about you. You don't seem to have been tarred with the same brush as the rest of the Gentiles in Lost Chief. That isn't saying I excuse the way you talked to me up in your chapel, but I guess you're to be trusted as far as women are concerned.

"The girl came in here last night. She was pretty well tuckered, but as mad as hops. She told me that John Spencer had been hunting her for years, that Saturday night she had a violent quarrel with him and that she fled from home in a burst of anger. She's headed for the pass, and nothing that I know of can stop her. We made her stay all night and we outfitted her good. She wanted to pay us, but we wouldn't let her. She thought maybe she could make through the pass by to-night, but I doubt it. Snow is awful deep up on Black Devil. We've been looking for her back all day."

Douglas drew a long breath.

"Thank you, Mr. Nelson," he said, and started for the door.

"Wait! Wait!" cried Mrs. Nelson. "You must have some supper."

Douglas shook his head.

"Every minute counts."

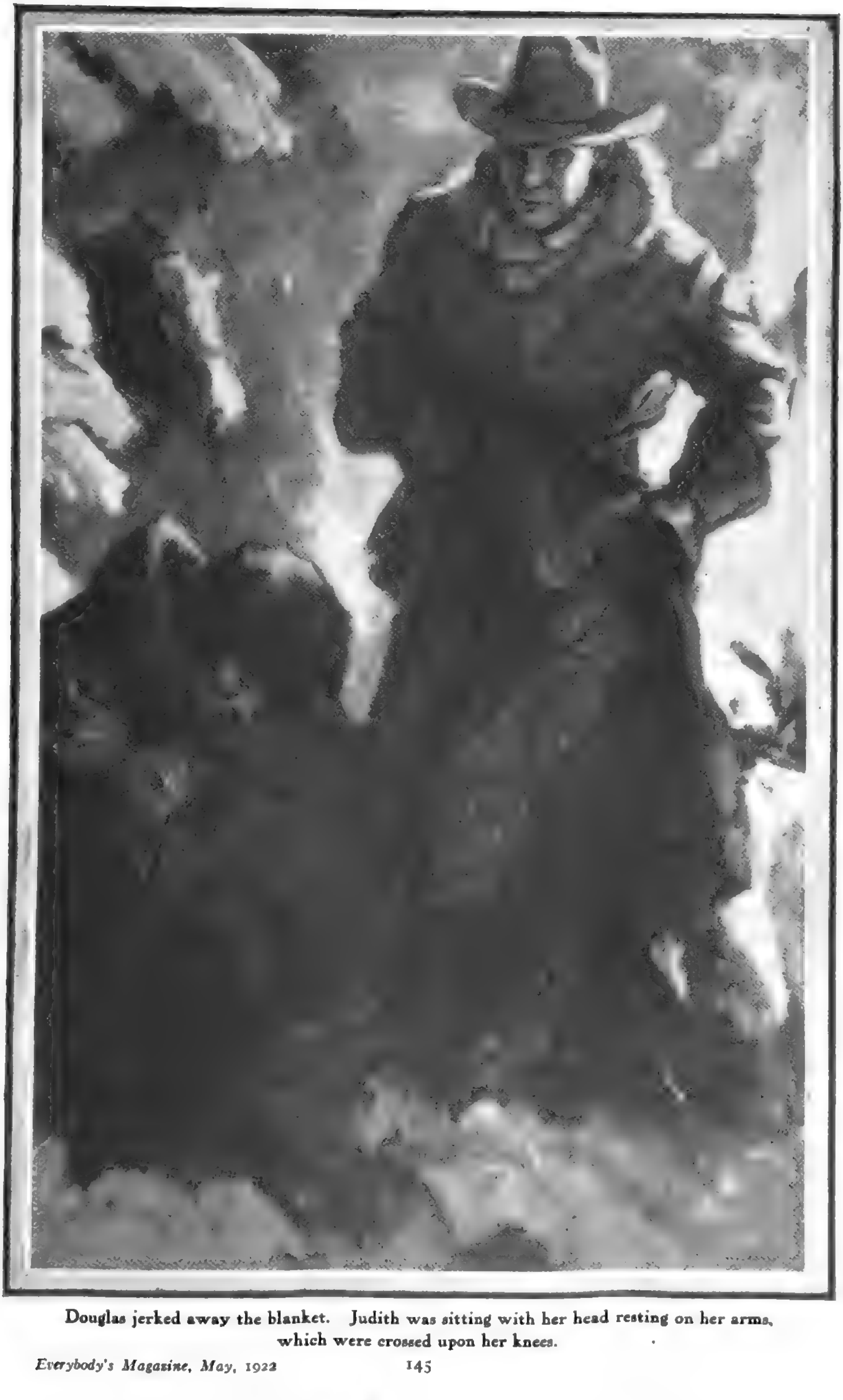
Nelson walked over and put a big hand on Doug's shoulder.

"You fill yourself with some hot food, Spencer. You know better than to tackle this job empty. How many horses have you?"

"Two!"

"I'll feed 'em. Go sit down to that table."

Douglas slowly pulled off his gloves and his voice broke boyishly as he said,



Douglas jerked away the blanket. Judith was sitting with her head resting on her arms, which were crossed upon her knees.

"You folks are awful kind."

"Mormons are human beings, I guess," grunted Elijah, as he pulled on his mackinaw.

Mrs. Nelson heaped Doug's plate and filled his cup with scalding coffee. Shortly Elijah came in and sat down to his interrupted meal.

"Good horses you got," he said; "but you've worked 'em hard."

"Will you sell me some oats?" asked Douglas.

Elijah nodded.

"If you get over the pass and down into Johnson's Basin, you can get more fodder there. A Mormon friend of mine is in the basin this winter with sheep. I told Judith that, and exactly how to get there. There's no trail. But, if you reach the summit, get a line on a bare patch in the middle of the basin—that's the lake—and the highest peak across the basin. It's got the mark of a big cross on it. You can't miss it. If you'll keep the lake and the cross in line, it will bring you out at Bowden's sheep-ranch. I never took the trip in winter, so I don't know what the snows are on the other side of Black Devil. Johnson's Basin drops down to about three thousand feet elevation, and there's not enough snow there in winter to keep the sheep from grazing. Ma, you put up a bundle of grub."

"I've got grub for a week, thanks!" exclaimed Douglas. Then he asked Elijah hesitatingly, "Will you tell me why you are so kind to me?"

"As I said, it's my religion."

"Have you always been religious?"

"Brought up on the Book of Mormon," replied Elijah. "And I've brought my children up the same way. What results is your preacher getting over in Lost Chief?"

Douglas's jaw set.

"They burned the chapel and my cabin Saturday night, and I haven't seen the preacher since."

"Burned them! Who did it?"

Douglas told the story in a few terse sentences.

"But where is that poor old man?" cried Nelson. "Have you looked for him?"

"I was trying to get a line on him from Scott Parson when Judith's mother brought word she was gone." Douglas paused and gave Elijah a straight look. "I couldn't stop to look for any one on earth if Judith needed me."

"Judith can take care of herself better than that old man," insisted Elijah.

"Nothing to it!" grunted Douglas. "He's been in the cow-country forty years. Not but what I know it was a frightful thing to leave him. But it can't be helped."

"What shall you do about a church now?" asked Mr. Nelson.

"Give it up. Give religion up." Douglas spoke bitterly.

"Humph!" exclaimed Elijah. "Religion probably won't give you up. You've got mighty little to say about it, young man. If I don't miss my guess, the Almighty is directing your business these days. You are just about doing what He says and flattering yourself it's your own plan. God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform."

"I wish I could believe it," muttered Douglas, starting for the door.

"Now, I shifted saddle and pack for you to two horses of mine," said Elijah. "If you find that girl, bring her back here. I want to have some talk with you both. You can pay me rent for 'em, so don't start to argue."

"Well, whether you are a Mormon or a Sioux, you're sure white!" exclaimed Douglas. He shook hands and went out into the starlight. Elijah followed.

"The moon will be up by the time you need it. Follow trail up to the timber-line. Skirt the timber-line till you reach the first shoulder of Black Devil. After that, God help you! The horse you are on is named Tom."

WARMED, refreshed, and with hope shadowing his anxiety, Douglas turned the horses southward. The trail through the fields for three or four miles was easy to find in the starlight. The valley narrowed as it rose, and finally Lost Chief and Black Devil thrust foot to foot in a narrow cañon. Doug followed this for a mile, then turned upward to the right along the timber-line that clothed the ankles of Black Devil. The moon had not yet risen when the timber disappeared at the foot of the first shoulder.

The snow was knee-deep, but without crust, and the horses were sturdy and fresh.

But they were panting by the time they crested the shoulder, and Doug pulled them up for a rest.

There was no view of the peak from this spot. Before him lifted a dark, shadowy wall sloping interminably to the remote heavens. To the east, Lost Chief range was silhouetted against the rising moon. To the west was a chaos of unfamiliar peaks. When the dusk of the mountain slope before him turned to radiant silver, Douglas started the horses on and spurred Tom relentlessly until he halted in snows that came to the horses' shoulders. Both of the animals began to fight obstinately to turn back.

Douglas dismounted and fastened the led horse to Tom's saddle and Tom to a scrub cedar. Then he wallowed forward afoot to break trail. The wind was increasing with the elevation, but even higher than its eery note sounded the wild call of a solitary coyote. Douglas beat trail until his lungs protested; then he brought the horses forward and, fastening them again, attacked the great drift alone. His nose was bleeding slightly when he at last won the crest of the first shoulder, which was blown clear of snow.

He mounted and rode well up on the second shoulder before the horses again balked. Lost Chief Peak now had dropped so that, dimly beyond, he could glimpse the Indian range. And still Black Devil's top was invisible beyond the terraced ridge that opposed the little cavalcade.

When, after infinite effort, Douglas surmounted the third shoulder, he paused, appalled, as were the horses, by the loneliness and danger of the position. The ridge had narrowed until its top offered barely a foothold, with sides dropping to unthinkable depths. The snow had blown clear and the wind was piercing. Tom made for the shelter of a cedar which stood just before them like a sentinel guarding the eternal loneliness beyond. When he reached the cedar, Douglas gave a hoarse cry of relief. The remains of a cottontail and some charred sticks had not yet blown away.

Suddenly Douglas chuckled.

"Safe so far! Some girl, our Judith!" he said aloud. "It can't be long since she camped here, or a coyote would have finished off that bunny's carcass. Hang it, I'll bet she's enjoying herself, and me sweating blood!"

He chuckled again; then his jaw stiffened and he set the horses to the last shoulder below the pass. Tom, groaning, trembling, bloody flanks heaving, fighting constantly to turn, when at last Douglas sought to force him through the drift that topped the shoulder, deliberately lay down. Douglas freed himself from the stirrups and jerked the horse to his feet.

"I wouldn't own an ornery, unwilling brute like you for a ranch," he panted. "Do you think I'm enjoying this, that we're a bunch of dudes on a summer outing? I'll get mad at you in a minute, fellow!"

Tom snorted and did his not inconsiderable best to kick the pack-horse, which had embraced the opportunity to go to sleep. Then he snapped at Douglas, who promptly cuffed him on the nose. Tom reared and fell and began to roll down the terrible slope. The led horse did not waken or stir. Doug flung himself after Tom. Slipping, falling, rolling, he finally caught the reins, and though Tom dragged him fifty yards on downward, he at last braced his spurs against a boulder; the reins held, and Tom brought up, trembling and coughing. And now horse and man could only stand for a long time struggling for breath. When his numbing hands gave warning that his rest-period must cease, Douglas, with the reins caught over his elbow, began a fight back to the crest of the ridge, a fight to which the previous portion of the trip had been as nothing. When they reached the led horse, still sleeping with his nose between his fore legs, there was no more fight left in Tom, and Douglas dropped into the snow to rest.

THE moon was setting when he led his little train through the gigantic drift to the long slope which lifted to the pass. There was no snow here. The slope, as far as Doug could discern in the failing light, was a glare of rough ice. Over this he dared not urge the horses until daylight. He looked at his watch. It was nearly five o'clock. He fastened the horses to the only cedar in sight, then stood in the wind, debating with himself.

He was very much exhausted and the rare air and the intense cold were giving him no chance to recuperate. There was no place to make camp. The tiny cedar offered neither shelter from the wind nor an adequate amount of fuel. And up here, in this hostile loneliness, his anxiety over Judith returned threefold. Strong as she was, clever as she was, she was as open to accidents as he. Suppose her horses had slipped on this ice and had gone over the black edge. Douglas dropped to his hands and knees and crept out upon the glossy surface. A hundred yards of this and he came to a pause before a giant boulder beside which grew several dwarf cedars. He drew his ax from its sheath and, after long effort with his stiffened fingers, he got the green wood to burning. Dawn, about seven, found him napping against the warm face of the rock. He brought the horses up to the camp, fed them and himself, and as the sun shot over the Indian range, he prepared to lead the horses onward.

The crest of Black Devil now lifted immediately above him. Just below the crest, a ledge broad enough for a pack-horse led straight into the blue of the sky. To the right the dark wall of the crest. To the left a sheer drop where the cañon between Lost Chief range and Black Devil yawned hideously. This ledge, this narrow, painful crossing, was the pass.

Douglas drew his ax and prepared to roughen a trail over the ice for the horses. But, to his unspeakable delight, he had not gone far when he discovered that another ax and other horses had gone over the ice before him. He was grinning cheerfully as he sheathed his ax and took Tom's reins in hand.

IT WAS noon when he reached the pass. Sheer red walls to the right, rising to the hovering top of Black Devil. The sickening cañon-depths to the left. To the south, myriad peaks, a whole world of peaks, snow-covered, serene. Far, far below, a blurred green valley with a tiny white spot in its center—Johnson's Basin. The slope south from the pass was very steep and deep with snow. Douglas saw Judith's trail zigzagging to a low shoulder, round which it disappeared.

He fed the horses, ate some biscuits and bacon, both frozen, and started downward. Shortly snow began to fall, but he had no difficulty in following trail until mid-afternoon. Then he paused on the low shoulder. There were scrub-pines in which Judith had made camp. The snow had thickened until Doug could see hardly ten feet ahead. He was utterly weary and very cold. He knew that he ought to go into camp for the night, but he would not. He tied the horses beneath the trees, a grateful, windless haven to the poor brutes, and went slowly on to reconnoiter.

Judith's tracks continued abruptly down the slope. Douglas followed for a few feet, then stopped, appalled. A horse had fallen here and rolled down the steep left wall. He dropped to his knees and followed down the wide snow-packed trail. He had not far to go. From the snow drifted over a rock protruded a horse's hoof. Doug swept the body free of snow. It was old Buster, with his right fore leg broken and a bullet-hole in his head. Hot tears scalded Doug's wind-tortured eyes. After a moment of search for further details of the catastrophe, he crawled up the wall again and, after a frantic hunt, found a blurred single horse-trail leading on from the spot whence Buster had slipped. He went back for his own horses, mounted Tom and went on with the weary search.

But he could not continue long. It was soon dusk, and he dared not risk losing Judith's tracks. When he came upon the next cedar clump, clinging precariously to the mountainside, he dismounted. Under the shelter of the trees he fastened the horses. Then he tramped down the snow for his fireplace and chopped a night's supply of wood. After he had eaten a hot supper, he wrapped himself in his blankets and huddled over the fire, consumed by anxiety.

The wind rushed by the cedars without pause. The hard, dry pellets of snow rattled in the trees. The horses, their chins hung with icicles, stood with bowed heads, motionless.

All of Doug's life passed in review before his sleepless eyes. He could not recall when he had not been shaping his days about Judith. Even before he had realized that he loved her, even when they constantly snarled at each other like young pups, she had been the center of his universe. He shivered with something more than cold. He had a sudden and shattering conviction that all the events of his life had been mysteriously propelling him toward the terrible loneliness of this night on Black Devil Pass.

He did not know how long he sat shivering with this appalling sense of destiny upon him. He was roused by a faint cry above the wind. At first, he thought it must be a coyote. But when it was repeated, he started to his feet and concentrated an agony of attention on the sound. Once more it came—the long-drawn, troubled nickering of a horse. Doug dropped the blankets and strode out from the shelter of the trees to deliver a long "Coo-ee." There was no response.

He dragged his entire supply of firewood before the shelter, set it blazing, and then plunged downward. It was a terrible journey. He slipped and fell so often and so far that when the light behind him dwindled to a faint point, he dared venture no farther. Sick at soul, he prepared to turn back, pausing, however, to give one last "Coo-ee."

A horse nickered just below him.

"Judith!" shouted Douglas.

There was no reply. He flung himself downward as again the horse gave voice and immediately brought up in a cedar clump. A horse stamped close to his hand. Doug lopped off some cedar boughs and with a maddening amount of effort got a small blaze going. First, Whoop-la's anxious eyes and snow-covered head, then, close to Douglas's feet, a huddled, snow-covered body. He jerked away the blanket. Judith was sitting with her head resting on her arms, which were crossed upon her knees.

"Judith! Judith! Judith!" sobbed Douglas. He crouched beside her, gathered her in his arms.

He laid his cheek against her lips. A faint warmth! He shook her frantically and beat her hands with his. Then he rose and, lifting her, balanced her on her feet, never ceasing for a moment to sob her name. He forced some whisky between her teeth. He manipulated her limp body until, still in a coma, she stumbled back and forth beside the fire, almost entirely supported by Douglas's arm.

"Judith! Judith! Judith!"

"Yes, Doug"—weakly.

"Oh, Judith! How could you?"

"Where'd you come from, Douglas?"

"My camp is up the mountain a ways. Why didn't you have a fire?"

"Lost my pack when I lost Buster. Lost my match-safe when I fell with Whoop-la, late this afternoon."

"I'm going to take you back up to my camp, Judith."

"I don't think I can make it, Doug. You bring your camp down here."

"I never could get you warm in this wind. Come on! We'll have to leave Whoop-la here till morning."

They started the upward climb. Judith gave to it the last end of her depleted strength. They reached the still glowing ashes of Doug's fire on their hands and knees, and lay beside it until a renewed sense of chill brought Douglas to his feet. He chopped more wood, rekindled the fire in the center of the camp and, when he had established Judith by it, prepared some hot food for her. She ate ravenously. Douglas watched her with satisfaction radiating from every line of his wind-burned face.

"Are you warm now, Judith?" he asked, when she had swallowed her second cup of coffee.

"Well, not exactly warm, but I'm thawing rapidly."

"All right. Now I'll let you sleep."

He established her in the blankets close to the fire and set himself to the task of keeping the fire going. The snow ceased at midnight and the cold grew more intense. Doug chopped wood or walked up and down before the fire, to fight off the snow-stupor which constantly menaced him.

At dawn Judith stirred, blinked at Douglas and sat erect, staring. Her eyes were bloodshot. As Douglas paused to look at her, he swayed on his feet.

"Have you been up all night?" she demanded.

"Had to keep the fire," he mumbled.

Judith rose and pushed him down among the blankets, where she covered him carefully.

"It's my turn now," she said.

HE SLEPT for three or four hours. When he woke, Judith was making coffee, and Whoop-la was munching oats with the other horses. The sun sifted brilliantly through the cedars.

"Well, old trapper?" said Judith, smiling.

Douglas grinned and got up.

"Nothing like having your meals served promptly!" he exclaimed.

"Come and eat, Doug. We must be on our way."

"Yes; we must make the pass by dusk," he agreed, taking the bacon sandwich and the steaming coffee-cup she held out.

"I'm not going back that way. We're only a day's ride from Bowdin's ranch."

"I've got to get back and look out for old Fowler," replied Douglas.

"Let me have enough grub and feed to take me to Bowdin's, then."

"No, Judith." Douglas shook his head.

"But I'm never going back to Lost Chief."

"Then come as far as Nelson's. I'll take you out to the railroad and loan you enough money to live on until you find work. You've done a great stunt crossing Black Devil in winter, Jude. And I'm proud of you. But putting over a stunt isn't acting with judgment."

"How could I go on to Mountain City with that father of yours following me?" demanded Judith.

"Judith," said Douglas quickly, "I'm ashamed of him! I am ashamed! Oh, Jude, let me make it up to you!"

Suddenly Judith put her hands before her eyes and began to sob. Douglas groaned. He put his arm about her shoulders, and presently she leaned against him and wept with complete abandonment. Finally, she began to talk.

"Lately—he was always trying to buy me—with things I love best—horses and books—and dogs. I didn't have anybody I could go to. If I went to you, you'd want to—marry me, and—Inez—Inez has gone back on all the ideas she got me to believe. She's gone and fallen in love—with Peter. And she told me she was going to do everything she could to make him marry her. The whole valley is rotten. Every one has an ax to grind. I want to get out of Lost Chief."

Douglas patted her shoulder in silence.

"A girl has a brain as well as a man," she went on. "She doesn't want to be just a servant to a dirty old rancher. She wants to live by her brain, like he does."

"A man wants something besides brain," said Douglas gently. "He wants love. And if he's got the right kind of a brain, he'll love only a woman that's got one, too."

Judith did not reply to this.

"You have to have an ideal to live by," she continued. "I thought Inez had given me one, and"—with a sob—"I don't see how it can work out."

"I suppose folks have been trying out Inez's idea ever since love began," said Douglas, "and the homely, every-day details of living make it impossible."

Judith drew a long breath. Douglas half whispered:

"You say you trust me, Judith. Are you very, very sure you can't love me?"

JUDITH sprang to her feet, and Douglas rose with her. She walked rapidly up and down before the fire. It was so evident that a tempest was raging within her that Douglas watched her in astonishment and dismay. It might have been a moment or a lifetime to the young man before Judith halted in front of him. Her eyes burned with a light he never had seen in them.

"And if," she exclaimed, "I told you that I loved you, that for years I had fought off a love for you that was like a burning flame in my heart, if I told you that to me you are as beautiful and as fine as all the lovers in the world can be, but that I never, never could give myself to you in marriage, what would you say?"

Douglas's gloved hands clenched and unclenched, but he returned steadily,

"I'd ask you why?"

Judith's expression did not relax.

"I've told you a thousand times. I cannot bear to think of killing love by marriage. And it always works so, always. And yet—oh, Douglas, I love you!"

Douglas threw back his head with a sudden deep breath, swept Judith into his arms and kissed her with all the ardor of years of repression. Judith clung to him as if she could not let him go. And yet, when he lifted his face from hers, she stepped back and said, none the less firmly because her voice was husky,

"But, Douglas, I won't marry you."

Douglas did not smile.

"Perhaps you won't, my dearest, but I'm not going to let that thought spoil the big moment of my life. Oh, Judith, why didn't you tell me long ago?"

"Because nothing will satisfy you but marriage," replied Judith, with a half sob.

Douglas smiled wistfully and turned to

look at the mad descent that must be made. He put his arm about Judith and turned her face to the south.

"Do you think I can let you go down there? If it was impossible before, think how I feel about it now."

Judith clung to him.

"I don't want to leave you, Douglas. But I can't go back to Lost Chief—I can't!"

"If I give you my word that I'll take you out to Mountain City as soon as I can outfit, will you come back to Nelson's with me? Look at me, Jude!"

Judith searched Douglas's eyes for a long moment; then she said brokenly:

"Yes; I'll come. Not because I think it's sensible, but because, now I've given away this much, I don't want to be separated from you till—till I've unpacked my heart to you."

Douglas thanked her with his lips on hers. Then he said softly,

"Let's break camp, Judith, while the sun is high."

IT WAS noon when Douglas on Tom, leading his pack-horse, followed by Judith on Whoop-la, began the climb back to the pass. It was far more difficult than the ascent from the other side.

The drifts had blown clear of the narrow ridge down which poor Buster had slid. They dared not trust the horses here, but crawled gingerly on hands and knees, the animals slipping and snorting behind them. When they had completed the crossing, Doug saw tears frozen on Judith's lashes.

"Judith, I guess the old horse was glad to go in service that way," he said softly, as they beat their numbed hands before mounting. Judith tried to smile through her tears, but said nothing.

All the brilliant afternoon they worked their uneven way upward. Each of the horses was down again and again. Both the young riders were bruised and cut by ice. Both were drawing breath in rapid sobs when, just before sunset, they fought the last few yards to the level of the pass, won to it and lay on the icy ledge, exhausted. When they had lain there for a moment, Douglas said between gasps,

"We will—have—to—go—right—on—or the—cold will get us."

Judith turned over on her face and followed Douglas on her hands and knees. Whoop-la was as careful in following her as a dog might have been. But Tom was quite as apt to step on Doug as on the trail. He was now, however, too weary to be ugly, and the pass was crossed without incident.

It was dusk when they made the great rock with its cedar clump where Douglas had camped before. Judith's strength was gone. Douglas, after long fumbling, unrolled the blankets from the led horse and made Judith wrap herself in these while he kindled a fire with the wood he had left behind him. Over this flame he heated his hands until they could hold his ax; then he proceeded to bring down another cedar. Shortly a huge fire was warming the face of the rock, the coffee-pot was bubbling, the bacon was frying.

When Douglas had held a cup of coffee to Judith's lips and she had emptied this and eaten the first rasher of bacon, her teeth ceased to chatter and the snow-stupor left her eyes.

"Almost nipped us that time, Doug," she said.

"Nice, girlish kind of amusement you choose!" he returned, with a grin. "Don't close your eyes till I say you can. A night camp under the top of Black Devil is plain suicide if you forget for a moment."

"I'm going to chop some wood and get warmed up," said Judith.

"You save your strength for to-morrow," demurred Douglas, eying Judith's tired, snow-burned face with a worried smile.

When he had made the camp ready for the night, he sat down beside her and drew her close against him.

"This camp"—he smiled—"might seem sort of cold and up in the air to some people, but it's pretty near to heaven to me."

Judith turned to look into his face.

"I never connect the man you've grown to be," she said, "with the horrid boy you used to be."

"Boys are rotten," agreed Douglas cheerfully; "but you've changed some yourself."

Judith nodded.

"I still swear some, but I'm going to quit. Peter's always after me about it, and I suppose, if I'm going to work in an office, I've got to polish my manners."

"You'll be a wonder in an office," grunted Douglas. "You won't be homesick for the range. Oh, no!"

"I'll stick it out. See if I don't! Will-power is the best thing I possess. Inez always said I'd never get up courage to run away. Even she didn't know me."

"I wish Inez had run away. That girl is the worst thing in Lost Chief."

"How is she worse than Charleton?"

"Because she's more likable than he and so has more influence. Why, Jude, if I hadn't always been caring for you, she'd have got me twisted just the way she has you."

"I'm not twisted," protested Judith stoutly. "I'm just not afraid to see marriage as it is. Sordid!"

"Inez!" sniffed Douglas.

"Don't let's begin that again," exclaimed Judith. "Just love me, Douglas, and let me go away."

He drew her closer still and kissed her.

"Love you!" he repeated in his quiet voice. "You might as well tell me to breathe or my heart to beat. Judith, I—well, I don't think it's possible for me to make you see how you've been my whole life ever since the day after I drove the preacher out of the schoolhouse. Do you remember how I wouldn't let you go with dad to feed the yearlings?"

"Yes, I remember, because from that moment you were a little different from other Lost Chief men in my mind. Tell me some more."

"I can't tell it to you. I can't, Jude! You wouldn't understand. You are so mixed up in my mind with grandfather's dream of Lost Chief and mine and with the preacher and God that I don't know myself where one leaves off and another begins. And to-night one part of me is on fire with happiness and another is frozen with discouragement. Are you sure you care for me, Judith?"

"Ever since that night in the hay-loft when you kissed me, after your father shot Swift. I didn't want to love you; there didn't seem much romance about a boy you'd lived with all your life. I didn't want to marry. I wanted to give all there was in me to some one big and fine enough to appreciate it. And after all it's only you."

"Only me!" ejaculated Douglas comically.

Judith did not smile.

"I fought and fought against it. But every year I saw you growing into a bigger, finer man than Lost Chief ever had known—a lonely sort of man, not afraid to be laughed at even when it was about a matter of religion. I hated to see you making a fool of yourself, and yet I admired you for it. You grew so straight and self-controlled, and, Doug, you are so wonderful to look at! No one can look into your eyes and not see how you've fought to make a man of yourself. I love you, Douglas!"

They clung to each other in the firelight.

"Judith! Judith! I can't let you go!" breathed Douglas.

"I must go!" Judith freed herself suddenly. "Nothing shall persuade me to go back to the commonness of marriage in Lost Chief."

"Marriage is exactly what you make it," declared Douglas. "I believe we can keep it beautiful."

"I'm afraid," repeated Judith. "It's hard to do or be anything fine in Lost Chief. See what they did to you! Douglas, what are you going to do about their burning up your place?"

"I'm going to fix Scott Parson!" he cried. "Once and for all!"

"How about rebuilding the chapel?"

"Judith, I guess I'll have to give up on that. The folks don't want it."

"Fowler was the wrong man," said Judith.

"He didn't have much tact. But it wouldn't have made any difference who I got in there. They don't want religion. I've had a big dream, Judith. But I guess it's all over now—if you are going away—" His voice broke, and he shivered violently.

Judith looked anxiously into his face. His lips were blue.

"You go chop some more wood," she said, "and when you are warmed up, you crawl into these blankets and sleep for four hours. I'll keep the fire up. You are so tired, Doug, that the cold will get you if you aren't careful."

DOUGLAS rose reluctantly and wearily began an attack on another tree. He was not half through with his task when he he dropped slowly to the ground. Judith ran to him and half led, half carried him to the blankets. She covered him in snugly.

"Now you sleep!" she exclaimed. "It's my turn to work."

It was midnight when she wakened Douglas. She was blue and shivering.

"Can you take your watch now, Doug, old boy?" she asked.

Douglas got stiffly to his feet.

"You've saved my life, Judith! I'm a new man. Roll in and don't move till I call you."

It was long and bitter cold till dawn. Douglas was too weary, too cold for coherent thought, and even his new-found happiness could not blur the fact that he and Judith were playing with death on Black Devil Peak. He roused Judith when, far below and to the east, the Indian range turned black against a crimson sky. They made a hasty breakfast and started the stiff and weary horses down the last lap to Mormon Valley.

IN SPITE of their weariness, the horses needed little urging, and the weather was clear. By noon they made the valley. But it was a slow-moving little outfit that finally crawled past Nelson's corral and was greeted by a shout from the cabin door. Elijah, his wife and children rushed out to meet them, and led the two exhausted young riders into the house and into the big bed-living-oom off the kitchen. They were ensconced in chairs before the red-hot stove.

Half blinded by snow-glare and the bitter wind, it was several moments before Douglas saw an old man sitting eagerly erect in one of the beds. Doug started to his feet.

"Where'd they find you, Mr. Fowler?"

"Sit down, Douglas," replied the preacher. "You are worse off than I was."

"I was starting after you when I found out about Judith—" began Doug.

"Judith needed you more than I did," interrupted Mr. Fowler. "Don't try to talk till you're warmed and rested."

"That won't take long," croaked Douglas.

But, as a matter of fact, it was morning before he woke to clarity of mind. He knew vaguely that he had been toasted until he protested, and fed enormously and had been rolled into a feather bed. But he knew nothing more until the smell of frying food and the sound of women's voices in the kitchen roused him.

The living-room was flooded with sun. The preacher was putting wood in the red-hot stove.

"Where's Judith?" asked Douglas.

"Helping Mrs. Nelson get breakfast. How are you?"

"Fine! Do you suppose I can shave before breakfast?"

The preacher nodded toward the pail and basin on a stand in the corner, with a shaving-mug and razor on the shelf above. He made no attempt to talk to Douglas during the making of his toilet.

It was an exceedingly well-groomed young rider who appeared at Elijah's long breakfast-table, where Judith, snow-burned, but otherwise her usual self, was already seated. She gave Douglas an appreciative glance and smile.

They sat long at the table. The children were sent off to school. The adventure up and down Black Devil Peak was thoroughly discussed. Then Douglas turned to the preacher.

"And what happened to you, Mr. Fowler?"

Mr. Fowler smiled grimly.

"That won't take long to tell. After you left for the dance, I fell asleep in my chair. I was awakened by flames crackling, and I found that the cabin roof was in flames. I ran out. The chapel was ablaze in a dozen places. I rushed to the corral for a horse. I thought I'd go for help at your father's place. But just as I ran into the stable for a bridle, some one threw me down and blindfolded me and put me on a horse. I didn't put up a fight, Douglas. I'm too old."

"Who was it?" demanded Douglas.

"I suppose it was Scott Parson, though I couldn't prove it. I suppose he took me along the trail Nelson has kept open past the old government corral to get to Scott's trail when he goes for his mail. Anyhow, he locked me into that old cabin up in the government corral. There were fuel and matches; so he didn't want me to freeze to death. I think he intended to come back the next day and take me somewhere else before I freed myself or some one found me. But his plans must have miscarried, for he didn't come back. It was so very cold and I was so lightly clad that, at first, I didn't dare to start out even after I'd broken the door open. But two days of hunger made me desperate. The trail was fairly well snowed in, but I headed for what I thought would be Nelson's ranch, and in an hour or so I was all in. If Elijah hadn't found me, I'd have died of the cold."

"I was riding over to Lost Chief for news," explained Elijah.

"You were riding for God, I'd say!" cried Mr. Fowler. "And if I'd been a Mormon bishop, I couldn't have been made more welcome than I have been here."

"A preacher's a preacher." said Elijah. "Well, Douglas, what's next on your program?"

"I've promised to take Judith to Mountain City. She's going to get a job. I'm going to get a job up there, too."

"What!" exclaimed Judith.

"What's Lost Chief to me without you?" demanded Douglas coolly and entirely oblivious of the eager-eyed audience.

Judith's face expressed astonishment.

"I never thought you'd let Scott run you out, Douglas. Don't let him be a quitter, Mr. Fowler."

Mr. Fowler was watching Douglas with troubled eyes.

"I don't know," he said, "that I blame Douglas. It seems to me that Lost Chief must be conscious of its needs before it desires anything more than it has. I love Douglas very much. I'd not be sorry to see him get out into the world, where there is a bigger chance for his abilities than in that God-forsaken valley."

"Doug Spencer!" cried Judith. "Why, you know you'd never be happy anywhere else! Lost Chief is your home and the home of all your people before you."

"How about it being your home?" asked Douglas.

"No place is home to a woman where she has nothing of her own," replied Judith. "I haven't anything in Lost Chief. No chance to use my brain or earn a living. I've got a few cattle and old Whoop-la. You've got a ranch and a fine herd and the kind of standing that only a man can get in a community. Lost Chief is no woman's country."

"It ought to be made fit for women and for little children!" cried Mr. Fowler, with sudden vehemence. "I should have done it. But I failed there, as I have everywhere. I didn't bring God to Lost Chief or to Judith or, worst of all, to Douglas."

"Don't you two young people believe in God?" demanded Elijah Nelson.

They stared at him without replying.

"Who guided Judith over the pass?" asked the Mormon. "Her own smartness, I suppose, or chance—anything but the hand of the Almighty!"

"It was destiny. All of it has been destiny," said Douglas, suddenly.

"And what is destiny but God?" asked Elijah.

NO ONE spoke for a moment; then Elijah went on with Mr. Fowler's own vehemence:

"You folks over in Lost Chief have seen fit to treat us Mormons as if we were a pack of coyotes bedding down too near your herds. Did you ever try to find out what kind of people we really are, and why we stay and win out when we settle in a place? I'll tell you. The Church makes our settlements for us. When she calls us to settle in the wild, she says: 'Go, five families, or ten, or twenty, and settle in such a place. Take with you your wives and babies. Put your roots deep in the soil. Build for the future generations. Make a community deep-fertilized by the idea of Mormonism, train your children in it, cling one family to the other in helpfulness and to the Church in faith. Cooperate with each other and with the Church, and the Church will stand by you and loan you money, give you advice, be your very Fountain of Life.'

"And the Church does stand by us, and we by it. And we are building up God-fearing communities all over the West, just like the Puritans once built up in the East. Why? Because we pioneer, inspired by our Church and the love of God. What Gentile church is doing this, answering the economic needs of its people as well as the spiritual? Why should a settlement like yours prosper? The most promising young man in it is deserting it to chase after a flighty girl. It has no church. It has no minister. Ha! As long as you Gentiles are so, the Mormons can ride over you and crowd you out."

"You can't do anything of the kind," declared Judith.

"Why not?" asked Douglas bitterly. "Of course they can. Nelson is dead right."

Elijah gave Judith a scornful glance.

"You ought to be satisfied, Judith. You'll be getting your own way, no matter what becomes of Douglas. He ought never to leave Lost Chief. Though it will be better for us Mormons if he does."

"The Mormons are right," Douglas said. "It's the Church and the families that count. A man can't pioneer without a woman to back him. And Lost Chief is still pioneering. The right kind of woman could do more for Lost Chief really than a man. If Jude and I could work together in Lost Chief, we'd— My God, do you know what I'd do?" I'd rebuild the cabin and I'd rebuild the church. And we'd bring Mr. Fowler back. And Judith and I would go to church to him, and we'd hunt for God till we found Him. And when we found Him, we'd bring the children of the valley to the church. It's the children that count. All the Charleton Falkners and the Inez Rodmans can't score if the children are sure of God."

Mr. Fowler nodded.

"You're right, Douglas. Lost Chief offers a full-sized job to a woman with a brain and the right kind of vision."

Judith eyed Douglas with a sudden intense interest.

"That's the first time," she said eagerly, "that you've ever suggested any kind of future to me that made a demand on my intelligence." She turned to Elijah Nelson. "Is it true that you have your eyes on Lost Chief Valley, or are you just trying to bluff Douglas into going back because you like him?"

The Mormon's eyes narrowed.

"I like him—yes; but the Church says we are to take Lost Chief Valley, and we are going to take it when the time is ripe. I can afford to be as kind as I want to be to Douglas and Fowler. Nothing can stop us when we cross into your valley with the Church behind us. You folks hang together by habit. The Mormons are knit together by a divine idea that takes care of every moment of our lives. Do you think a man like Scott Parson can guard your gates? And Douglas is running away."

Judith jumped to her feet.

"He is not! If your Mormon religion can do all you claim for you, then our religion can do as much for us as it did for our ancestors. I never did believe there was a God, but that's not saying He's not to be found if you really hunt for Him."

"'If with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall ever surely find me,'" said Mr. Fowler quietly.

Judith gave him a quick look.

"That isn't the kind of God we young folks are looking for," she said.

"What do you look for?" asked Mr. Fowler.

Judith lifted her chin.

"A fire-mist and a planet,
  A crystal and a cell,
A jelly fish and a saurian,
  And caves where cavemen dwell.
Then a sense of law and beauty,
  And a face turned from the clod.
Some call it Evolution,
  And others call it God."

There was quiet in the warm, homely kitchen. Elijah Nelson cleared his throat.

"Nevertheless, Judith," he said, "this is a fair warning that I'm going to put the Book of Mormon into Lost Chief."

Judith flushed; her lips tightened, and she walked deliberately round the table, where she took the preacher's hand.

"Come, Mr. Fowler; let's go home with Douglas and get to work."

The preacher rose with alacrity.

"Where shall we go?" he asked.

"To Peter's, until I can rebuild the cabin," Douglas answered.

Elijah Nelson smiled grimly.

THAT afternoon, as the shadows on the plains east of the post-office grew long and blue-black, Judith and Douglas and Mr. Fowler jingled up to Peter's door. They slung their saddles on the fence, turned their horses into his corral and went in. Peter and Charleton were standing before the stove. The postmaster was dressed for a cold ride.

"Judith! You wild woman!" gasped Peter. "Where did you find her, Douglas?"

"Just the other side of Black Devil Pass," answered Douglas.

"Aw, come off!" exclaimed Charleton.

Judith removed her mackinaw and her beaver cap.

"We'll tell the story if you will feed us, Peter."

Peter undid a silk handkerchief that covered his ears.

"I was outfitted to follow Doug's trail. How long since you fed? Any casualities?"

"Poor Buster lies up on the pass, but no other accident," replied Douglas. "We put in last night at Elijah Nelson's, where we found Mr. Fowler. Can we stay with you for a while, Peter?"

"You sure can! Your father is doing well."

"Where's Scott Parson?" asked Douglas.

"Still with Inez," said Charleton. "Seems like you gave him a bad knock-out. He's having a beautiful time. Inez has turned on him, and Grandma Brown had to go over there and take care of him."

Peter set a kettle of beans on the stove.

"Take off your spurs, Mr. Fowler, and put your feet in the oven. You look half perished. I suppose it was Scott got after you. I hope he didn't hurt anything but your feelings."

Fowler laughed.

"My feelings were never in better shape than at this minute."

"Nor mine!" agreed Douglas.

"Nor mine!" added Judith.

Peter and Charleton stared from one face to the other.

"I told you, Peter," said Charleton, "that you were sweating blood for nothing."

"Let's have the story!" exclaimed Peter. "Jude, after you threw John, you evidently went crazy. Begin at that point."

Judith, swinging her spurred boots as she sat on the table, began obediently, finishing with Doug's finding her asleep on the south slope of Black Devil. Douglas told his story briefly, and Mr. Fowler repeated the account of his own adventure rapidly, but added with detailed accuracy the conversation which had taken place that morning in Elijah Nelson's kitchen.

"It's like that blank Mormon's nerve!" exclaimed Charleton, when Fowler ceased. "I told you folks years ago we'd got to work on him and wear him out."

"Well," said Douglas quietly, "we're not going to wear him out your way. It can't be done."

"We'll sure try it out," declared Charleton.

"No, we won't," said Douglas.

"Who says so?" cried Charleton.

"I say so," replied Doug.

"What's to prevent me?" sneeringly.

"Judith and I'll prevent you. See if we don't."

Charleton turned to Peter with a look of deep exasperation.

"The young fools think they will run the valley!"

"Why not?" asked Peter serenely. "They are the new generation, aren't they?"

"What are you going to do with Scott?" demanded Charleton. "He's the new generation, too."

"Well"—Doug's voice was as serene as Peter's—"I had thought of running him out of Lost Chief. But I guess I'd just as soon wear him out right here. What do you say, Jude?"

"We need Scott right in this valley. I can handle Scott," replied Judith. "Peter, aren't those beans ready yet?"

Charleton rose, stretched, yawned, lighted a cigarette.

"Too sanctimonious for my stomach," he said.

"The time will come when you'll ask for sanctimony, my friend." Fowler nodded knowingly.

"Pshaw!" grunted Charleton. "What does it all amount to?" He opened the door and paused, then added, with his sardonic smile,

"A moment's halt—a momentary taste
Of Being from the Well amidst the Waste—
And lo—the phantom caravan has reach't
The Nothing it set out from——"

Then he slammed the door behind him.

"AND good riddance!" exclaimed Judith. "The coffee is boiling, Peter. Shall I set the table?"

"Go ahead," agreed the postmaster. "Put up the chairs, Douglas. Did you throw down some hay for the horses? It's going to be a bitter cold night."

"We cared for them before we came in," said Mr. Fowler. "Do you mind"—as they gathered around the table—"if I say grace?"

"No," replied Peter; "you can say grace or make signs or do anything else that will help you to hang on in the big fight you've got ahead of you. I'll do it, too, if it will strengthen your hands."

Mr. Fowler scowled, smiled, shook his head and, covering his eyes, poured out his heart to the Almighty.

THE END

# The Dover Road

## *A Delightful Comedy Woven Round a Thoroughly Original Scheme for Keeping Those Who Have Made One Matrimonial Mistake from Accomplishing Another*

## By A. A. Milne

*Author of "The Red House Murder," "Mr. Pim Passes By," etc.*

*Published by courtesy of the author and the producer, Guthrie McClintic*

THE benevolent *Mr. Latimer* leads a detached life and views with grief the people who, in their effort to wring happiness from a sad world, so often make a mess of things. He has wealth enough to indulge his whimsies, so he establishes a place on the Dover Road, the road down which so many couples travel who are fleeing from marital evils they have to others they know not of. Here he puts into practise a plan for averting second matrimonial mistakes.

One November night, a table is laid for three in the hall of his home.

*Dominic*, the butler, is evidently expecting some one. Presently the bell rings, and he admits *Leonard* and *Anne*. In response to their questions, he tells them that this is a sort of hotel where they can be put up for the night. He helps them off with their wraps as though it were quite usual for them to be there, and announces that supper will be served in five minutes.

ANNE: It almost seems as though they had expected us.

LEONARD: My dear Anne, you aren't suggesting that I've done this on purpose?

ANNE: No, no! (*She leaves him and sits down.*) But why to-night of all nights?

LEONARD: Of course it's damned annoying missing the boat; but we can get it to-morrow morning. We shall be in Paris to-morrow night.

ANNE: To-morrow night—but that makes such a difference. I hate every hour we spend together like this in England.

LEONARD: Well, really, I don't see why.

ANNE: You must take it that I do, Leonard. I told you from the first that it was run away or nothing with me; there was going to be no intrigue, no lies and pretenses and evasions. And, somehow, it seems less—less sordid if we begin our new life together in a new country. (*With a little smile.*) Perhaps the French for what we are doing is not quite so crude as the English. Yes; I know it's absurd of me, but there it is!

LEONARD (*with a shrug*): Oh, well! (*Taking out his case.*) Do you mind a cigarette?

ANNE (*violently*): Oh, why do men always want to smoke, even up to the moment when they're going to eat? Can't you breathe naturally for five minutes?

LEONARD (*sulkily, putting his case back*): I beg your pardon.

ANNE: No. I beg yours. Nerves, I suppose.

LEONARD: Nonsense. My Anne with nerves! (*Bitterly.*) Now, if it had been Eustasia——

ANNE (*coldly*): Really, Leonard, I think we had better leave your wife out of the conversation.

LEONARD: I beg your pardon.

ANNE (*to herself*): Perhaps you're right. In a crisis we are all alike, we women.

LEONARD (*going over to her*): No—damn it—I won't have that! It's—it's blasphemy. Anne, my darling— (*He wants to kiss her, but she stops him.*)

ANNE: No! Now you're going to smoke. (*She settles him in his chair, takes a cigarette* *from his case and puts it in his mouth.*) I'll light it for you. Matches? (*She holds out her hand for them.*)

DOMINIC (*who has come in noiselessly*): Matches, my lady. (*He hands them to her.*)

They are both confused, but *Dominic* appears not to notice. Giving a professional touch to the table, he goes out.

LEONARD: Damn that fellow! I believe you're right, Anne. There's something odd about this place.

ANNE (*with interest*): Leonard, do you always arrange something fascinating like this when you elope? I think it's so romantic of you. But don't you think that the mere running-away is enough just at first? Leaving the fogs and the frets of England, the weariness and the coldness of it, and escaping together to the warm blue sun-filled south—isn't that romantic enough? Why drag in a mysterious and impossible inn, a mysterious and impossible Mr. Latimer? (*Dominic has told them that Mr. Latimer is the proprietor of this strange hostelry.*) You should have kept them for afterward—for the time when the poetry was wearing out and we were beginning to get used to each other.

Two footmen and two maids enter and take up positions round the table, followed by the butler.

DOMINIC: Mr. Latimer!

*Dominic* and his staff retire.

LATIMER: Good-evening.

He bows with an air—a middle-aged gentleman, dressed rather fantastically as regards his tie and his dinner jacket and the flower in his buttonhole.

LEONARD: Good-evening. Er——

LATIMER: You will forgive me for being announced in my own house, but I find that it saves a good deal of trouble. If I had just come in and said, "I am Mr. Latimer," then *you* would have had to say, "And I am—er—So-and-so, and this is—er—" Exactly. I mean, we can get on so much better without names. But of course——

LEONARD: You will excuse me, sir, but——

LATIMER (*going happily on*): But, of course, as you were just going to say, we must call each other something. (*Thoughtfully.*) I think I shall call you "Leonard." There is something about you—forgive the liberty—something Leonardish. (*With a very sweet smile to* ANNE.) I am sure you agree with me.

LEONARD (*coldly*): I think we have had enough for this, Mr. Latimer. I was giving you the benefit of the doubt. If you are not mad, then I will ask you some other explanation of all this nonsense.

LATIMER (*sniffing at the flower in his buttonhole*): An impetuous character, Leonard. It must be so obvious to everybody else in the room that an explanation will be forthcoming. But why not a friendly explanation following a friendly supper? But there is still this question of names. Now, we agreed about Leonard——

ANNE (*looking at* LATIMER *fearlessly*): My name is Anne.

LATIMER: Thank you, Miss Anne.

LEONARD (*awkwardly*): Er—my wife.

LATIMER: Then I am tempted to leave out the "Miss."

Supper is now ready, and they sit down. *Leonard* surlily resists *Mr. Latimer's* gay banter, and after playing with his food through two awkward courses, he pushes back his chair and gets up.

LEONARD: Now, look here, Mr. Latimer; this farce has gone on long enough. I do not propose to sit through a whole meal without some further explanation. Either we have that explanation now, or else—or else we'll be getting on our way. My chauffeur seems to have got off the track a little, but if you can put us onto the Dover Road——

LATIMER (*to himself*): The Dover Road! The Dover Road. A dangerous road, my friends. And you're traveling in the dark.

ANNE (*putting her hand on his arm*): What do you mean?

LATIMER: A strange road, Anne, for you—a new, untraveled road.

ANNE: I'm not frightened. But how did you know we were coming?

LATIMER: Saunders had his instructions to bring you.

LEONARD: You mean to tell me that you had the audacity to bribe my chauffeur?

LATIMER: No, no, Leonard! What I mean is that you had the foolhardiness to bribe my friend Saunders to be your chauffeur.

LEONARD: Upon my word! How dare you interfere in my concerns in this way, sir?

ANNE: Before you explain how you dare, Mr. Latimer, I should like to know *why* you are so interested in us. Who are you?

**Latimer**: No more than Mr. Latimer. It is a purely impersonal interest which I take—and I take it just because you are going the Dover Road, my dear, and it is a dangerous road for a young girl to travel.

**Anne** (*very cool, very proud*): I don't think I asked you to be interested in me, Mr. Latimer.

**Latimer**: Nobody does, my dear. But I am very interested in all my fellow travelers. It is my hobby.

**Leonard**: I object to this interference in my private affairs by a——

**Latimer**: Yes, yes; but you've said all that. It's interfering of me—damnably interfering. But I am doing it because I want you both to be happy.

**Anne**: I am not a child. Do you think I haven't thought? The scandal, the good name I am going to lose, the position of that other woman? I have thought of all these things. I am afraid you are old-fashioned, Mr. Latimer. You are going to talk to me of morality.

**Latimer** (*smiling*): Oh, no, I wasn't.

**Anne** (*not heeding him*): Living alone here, a bachelor, within these high walls, which keep the world out, you believe what the fairy-book tells us, that once two people are married they live happy ever after. I am the wicked woman coming between the happy husband and wife, breaking up the happy home. Is that it, Mr. Latimer?

**Leonard**: Rubbish! The happy home! Why, this is my first real chance of happiness.

**Latimer**: His first real chance of happiness! As he said when he proposed to Eustasia.

This upsets *Leonard*. *Latimer* goes on, as though to himself.

**Latimer**: Eustasia will divorce him. And then he will marry Anne. (*Turning to* Anne.) And then, as the fairy-books tell us, you will live happy ever after? (Anne *is silent.*) I live within my high walls, which keep the world out; I am old-fashioned, Anne. You are modern; you know the world. You don't believe the fairy-books, and yet—you are going to be happy ever after?

**Leonard**: I don't see what you're driving at.

**Latimer**: Anne does.

**Anne** (*raising her eyes to his*): I take the risk, Mr. Latimer.

**Latimer**: But a big risk! Oh, believe me, I am not so much out of the world as you think. Should I have known all about you, should I have brought you here if I were? I know the world; I know the risks of marriage. Marriage is an art—it's a profession in itself. (*Sharply.*) And what are you doing? Marrying a man whose only qualification for the profession is that he has tried it once and made a damned hash of it. (*Leonard's back goes up at this.*) Isn't it true?

**Leonard**: Well—er—I admit my marriage has not been a happy one, but I venture to say—well, I don't wish to say anything against Eustasia——

**Latimer**: Go on. Life is too short for us to be gentlemen all the time. (*After a pause.*) Miss Anne, I am not being moral. You see, I am a very rich man, and we know on good authority that it is difficult for a very rich man to be a very good man. But being a very rich man, I try to spend my money so that it makes somebody else happy besides myself. It's the only happy way of spending money, isn't it? And it's my hobby to prevent people—to try if I can prevent people making unhappy marriages. It's wonderful what power money gives you. Nobody realizes it, because nobody ever spends it save in the obvious ways. You may say that I should have prevented Leonard from marrying Eustasia in the first place. I have done that sometimes. I have asked two young people here—oh, properly chaperoned—and guests, not prisoners, as you are—two young people who thought that they were in love, and I have tried to show each to the other in the most unromantic light. Mostly it is my hobby to concentrate on these second marriages into which people plunge—with no parents to restrain them—so much more hastily, even, than they plunge into their first adventure. Yet how much more carefully they should be considered, seeing that one at least of the parties has already proved his utter ignorance of the art of marriage? And so, my dear friends, when I hear—and a rich man has many means of hearing—when I hear that two people are taking the Dover Road, as you were taking it to-night, I venture to stop them, and say, in the words of the fairy-book, "Are you *sure* you are going to live happy ever afterward?" Don't misunderstand me. I don't want to

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

separate you by force. I have no right to.

ANNE: But how modest suddenly!

LATIMER (*with a bow and a smile*): Madam, I admire your spirit. (*Seriously.*) But I meant what I said just now. I am not preventing you from going the Dover Road; I am only asking you to wait a few days and see how you get on. It may be that you two are the perfect soul-mates, that your union has already been decreed in heaven and will be watched over by the angels. If so, nobody will rejoice in your happiness more than I. I shall not say: "You have no right to be happy together. Leonard must remain with his lawfully wedded Eustasia." Believe me, I do not waste my money, my time, my breath in upholding the sanctity of an unhappy marriage. I was brought up in the sanctity of an unhappy marriage. Even as a child, I knew all about it. (*Less seriously.*) But oh, my dear Anne, let us have a little common sense before we adventure marriage with a man who is always making a mess of it. We know what Leonard is—how perfectly hopeless as a husband. You've never made a happy marriage yet, have you, Leonard?

LEONARD (*sulkily*): I don't want to say anything against Eustasia——

LATIMER: Good God, man, aren't you shouting it all the time? Why else are you here? But don't try to pretend that it's all Eustasia's fault.

ANNE (*getting up*): I think I will go to bed. How long do you want us to wait, Mr. Latimer?

LATIMER: Can you spare a week? You, with so many years in front of you?

ANNE: I have a father. I left him a note to say what I was doing. We don't see much of each other, but I thought it polite. Does that interfere with your plans at all?

LATIMER (*smiling*): Not at all. There was a little mistake about the delivery of that note. Your father is under the impression that you are staying with friends—in Kent. A great power, money!

ANNE: I congratulate you on the perfection of your methods. Good-night, Mr. Latimer.

THE next morning, *Eustasia*, *Leonard's* wife, who should be sitting patiently at home wondering when he will return, is having breakfast in *Mr. Latimer's* hospitable hall with a long-legged, attractive young man called *Nicholas*. She is making a good deal of fuss over *Nicholas*, and she is easily enjoying herself a hundred per cent. more than he is. The way he dispatched his breakfast should have convinced her that there is nothing wrong with him, but she has been treating him like an ill-nourished baby and pressing on him more toast—"a little teeny-weeny bit if his Eustasia butters it for him," more coffee, and an apple.

NICHOLAS (*his voice flat with boredom*): We've been here a week. Except for the first day, we have had all our meals alone together. And at every one of those meals you have asked me at least four times to have something more—when I had already said that I didn't want anything more; or in other words, you have forced me to say, "No, thank you, Eustasia," ninety-six times when there was absolutely no need for it. (*Her chin quivers, but he goes on inexorably.*) We are both young. I am twenty-six; you are twenty-five. If all goes well, we may look to have fifty years more together. Say two thousand five hundred weeks. Multiply that by a hundred and we see that, in the course of our joint lives, you will, at the present rate, force me to say, "No, thank you, Eustasia" two hundred and fifty thousand times more than is necessary.

EUSTASIA (*pathetically*): Nicholas!

NICHOLAS: I wondered if we couldn't come to some arrangement about it, that's all.

This brings the impending flood. She sobs so tumultuously that he has to shout loudly how happy this week with her has been until he can make her hear. This is not quite the truth. *Nicholas* has been wondering for several days how he can get out of his bargain.

EUSTASIA (*appeased*): How right Mr. Latimer was!

NICHOLAS (*with conviction*): He was, indeed.

EUSTASIA: How little we really knew of each other when you asked me to come away with you!

NICHOLAS: How little!

EUSTASIA: But this week has shown us to each other as we really are. And now I feel absolutely safe. We are ready to face the world together, Nicholas.

NICHOLAS (*without enthusiasm*): Ready to face the world together.

*Latimer*, who has, with a kindly heart,

Photographs by Abbe.

(Above) *Latimer* (Charles Cherry), who detains eloping couples on their way to the Continent at his place on the Dover Road, and forces them to endure each other's exclusive society for a few days before continuing on their way. He is talking to (left) *Anne* (Winifred Lenihan), who is running away with *Leonard*, and (right) *Eustasia* (Molly Pearson), *Leonard's* wife, who has eloped with *Nicholas*. (Below) On the left, *Leonard* (Reginald Mason), who has just arrived with *Anne*, and (right) *Nicholas* (Lyonel Watts), who, with *Eustasia*, has been *Latimer's* guest for a week, and is now thoroughly disillusioned and heartily sick of his adventure.

a gift for apt appearances, comes in and tells them of the other romantic couple who are now under his roof, and *Eustasia* begs to see them in order to reconcile them to the week of probation. *Latimer* promises that she shall, and she goes out.

*Nicholas*, who is frankly sick of *Eustasia* and the whole affair, feels absolutely hopeless now about extricating himself. *Latimer* gives him a word of cheer and hope, but *Nicholas*, whose time for being off to the Continent is only half an hour away, will not be consoled, and he leaves in great dejection.

Presently *Anne* comes down for her breakfast, followed shortly by *Leonard*. *Anne* looks very bright and fresh, but poor *Leonard* is in a pitiable condition. His luggage miscarried, and the suit he came in was dropped in the bathtub by the valet and is now being dried out. Meanwhile, he is wearing a rather disreputable, once-white bathrobe. His hair is unbrushed, and his cheeks are unshaven and blue. He scorned the razor and comb that the valet proferred. To top it all, the room in which he slept was damp and drafty (a part of *Latimer's* program) and he has a wretched cold. His appetite, however, is unimpaired, and he eats ravenously. *Anne* looks on rather disgustedly. She has something to say, but she can't win his attention long enough from the kidneys and bacon to say it. Finally, with some asperity, she tells him that she won't be humiliated so any longer, and in half an hour they will start for the Continent.

ANNE (*to* LEONARD): What made you even think that you could take anybody to the south of France? Without any practise at all? If you had been taking an aunt to Hammersmith—well, you might have lost a 'bus or two, and your hat might have been blown off, and you would probably have found yourselves at Hampstead the first two or three times—and your aunt would have stood up the whole way. But, still, you might have got there eventually. I mean it would be worth trying—if your aunt was very anxious to get to Hammersmith. But the south of France! My dear Leonard, it's so audacious of you!

*Latimer's* plan matures very rapidly after this. He has brought shaving-materials to the hall so that *Leonard* might avail himself of the grate-fire, when *Nicholas* comes in. The husband and the lover are just discovering that their experiences under *Latimer's* roof are identical when *Anne* joins them, and, several minutes later, *Eustasia*. They gaze round at each other speechless, as understanding breaks over them, *Latimer* walking up and down, almost exploding with pleasure.

THREE days pass, and the two couples are still in the house on the Dover Road. *Eustasia's* attention was quickly diverted from the perfectly healthy *Nicholas* to *Leonard*, and he is about fed up with his wife's persistent attentions—mustard footbaths, various potions, and Gibbon's "Roman Empire," which *Eustasia* has read to him each day, foot-notes and all.

*Nicholas* and *Leonard* have been a great support to each other during these three days. They look forward with eagerness to occasional chats together. To-day they manage one while *Eustasia* deserts *Leonard* to dress for dinner.

LEONARD: Between ourselves, you know—quite between ourselves—I'm about fed up with women.

NICHOLAS: Absolutely!

LEONARD: You are, too?

NICHOLAS: Rather! I should think so!

This whole-hearted agreement results in their planning to run away together.

NICHOLAS: When shall we go? To-morrow?

LEONARD: Mightn't get a chance to-morrow. Why not to-night? It seems a pity to waste the opportunity.

NICHOLAS: You mean while Eustasia's dressing?

LEONARD: Yes. Sleep the night at Dover and cross to-morrow morning.

NICHOLAS: She'll be after us.

LEONARD: Nonsense!

NICHOLAS: My dear man, you don't know Eustasia.

LEONARD: I don't know Eustasia? Well!

NICHOLAS: My dear chap, you've only had three days of her; I've had six. Lord! Look here; we shall have to— (LATIMER *enters.*)

LATIMER: What is it you want to do? Run away?

LEONARD: Well—er——

NICHOLAS: I say; however did you guess?

LATIMER: Leonard's car has had steam

up for the last twenty-four hours, waiting for a word from its owner.

LEONARD (*seeing the south of France*): By Jove!

LATIMER: Are you going with me, Nicholas?

NICHOLAS: Yes. Thought I might as well be getting on. Very grateful and all that, but can't stay here forever.

LEONARD (*to* LATIMER): I say; you do understand—I mean about Eustasia. I mean, when I've got quite well again—start fresh and all that. Cosset *her* a bit. But when you're ill—or supposed to be ill—Well, I mean, ask Nicholas.

LATIMER: My dear Leonard, why these explanations? Who am I to interfere in other people's matrimonial affairs? You and Nicholas are going away. Good-by. (*He holds out his hand.*)

NICHOLAS: Yes; but what about Eustasia? She's not going to miss the chance of cosseting Leonard just when she is getting into it. She'll be after him like a bird.

LATIMER: I see. So you want me to keep her here?

NICHOLAS: That's the idea. If you could.

LATIMER: How could I keep her here if she doesn't want to stay?

LEONARD: Well, how do you keep *anybody* here?

LATIMER: Really, Leonard, I am surprised at you! By the charm of my old-world courtesy and hospitality, of course.

LEONARD: Oh, well, I doubt if that keeps Eustasia.

LATIMER: There is only one way of keeping this devoted wife from her afflicted and suffering husband. Somebody else must have a temperature. Somebody else must be ill. Eustasia must have somebody else to cosset.

*Dominic*, though urged and tempted by bribes, refuses to sacrifice himself. The thought of Gibbon's "Rome" or Carlyle's "French Revolution" and a possible diet of bread and milk deters him. *Latimer* decides that so good a cause is worth a few days of *Eustasia*, and he offers himself as victim. His buoyancy of spirit, since he learned that *Anne* and *Nicholas* are not going to make a match of it, has made him feel equal to anything. But one of the footmen saves him. *Dominic* announces that *Joseph* (one of the footmen) has suddenly been taken ill.

LATIMER (*to himself*): I never thought of Joseph.

ANNE (*who was about to leave*): Oh, my poor Joseph! What is it?

DOMINIC: A trifling affection of the throat, but necessitating careful attention, her ladyship says.

LATIMER: Please tell her ladyship how very much I thank her for looking after Joseph. And tell Joseph how sorry I am for him.

DOMINIC: Yes, sir.

LATIMER: You can't go now, Anne. You will have to stay and chaperon Eustasia and me. (*She laughs.*) Take your hat off just to show that you are staying. (*She begins.*) Joseph's illness will probably be a lingering one, and you can't keep your hat on all the time. (*She takes it off.*)

ANNE: You are making me your prisoner again?

LATIMER: I can't let you go.

ANNE (*softly*): I am not sure I want to go.

LATIMER (*timidly*): Could you possibly pretend that I didn't hear that the first time, and—and just say it again?

ANNE (*shyly*): I am not sure that I want to go.

LATIMER (*happily*): She did say it!

They are both silent, thinking their own happy thoughts. Suddenly the bell rings.

LATIMER (*sitting up with a start*): Good Lord! Another couple arriving! I'd absolutely forgotten. (DOMINIC *comes in.*)

LATIMER (*entreatingly*): Dominic——

DOMINIC: I quite understand, sir. (*He opens the door. Latimer and Anne wait anxiously.*)

A VOICE: Oh—is this a hotel? My chauffeur said— We've had an accident outside.

DOMINIC: He was quite correct, sir. This is a sort of hotel. But it's closed just now, sir—*he glances round at* LATIMER *and* ANNE, *and then back again*—pending a change in the management. (*He shuts and bolts the door, then draws the curtains. There is an air of finality about it.*)

**Next month's play will be George Bernard Shaw's latest and most amazing dramatic production, "Back to Methuselah." See June EVERYBODY'S—out May 15th.**

# Happiness

*Why Is It That Women of Fine Intellect Often Commit the Most Astounding Blunders in Their Search for Happiness Through Love? Have All of Us Not Known Some One Like Eunice Fabian?*

## By Evelyn Campbell

WHEN Henry Fabian died, his widow behaved in a manner which astonished every one. While the town gasped, she efficiently collected the odds and ends of life insurance which Henry had bequeathed to her, all without asking aid of the Farmers and Drovers' Bank, rented her house furnished, and finally, to the scandal of all married women, put her children away from her, to live for the next four years with their father's relations on a big, comfortable Illinois farm, and dashed off to study medicine in Chicago.

Eunice Fabian had always been a queer girl—it had seemed slightly irregular to call her a girl, even at twenty. She was too big, too serious. It was difficult to connect the thought of love and marriage with her—as those two vocations were known in Middleburg. There had always been a look in her eyes, far-seeing, mystery-seeking, that placed her outside the legitimate ambitions of other girls. Everybody loved, everybody married—somebody; and some way her little world was expectant that Eunice would follow a path removed from the one beaten by the ages. But she did not until she had experienced both marriage and motherhood, which should automatically have placed her beyond the pale of adventure.

She managed her finances extraordinarily well, and even in that embryonic phase showed a hint of the business acumen which distinguished her later. She refused to lend money to Henry's brother, who wished to establish a pickle factory without owning a square foot of cucumbers; and though this earned for her the enduring disapproval of Henry's family, fortunately this did not extend to the two small daughters. And she very calmly refused to shoulder Henry's easy-going promises to shingle the First Presbyterian Church, which finished her with the elders. When they reminded her that such a lack of consideration for the expressed wishes of the dead was like flying in the face of Providence, she replied that, as she had never agreed with Henry living, she saw no reason why she should change her opinions for Henry dead; the shingling question had been vetoed by her from the first. These were only a very few of the many selfish traits exhibited in the weeks that preceded her departure upon her extraordinary mission; but they were sufficient to unite the town in a fraternal vow that its people would die in their beds before Eunice Fabian should attend them in that monstrous character—a female doctor.

No one could imagine how she had conceived the idea. Henry had kept the hardware store. There was nothing in that business to give his widow a taste for medicine, unless it was that Henry was undertaker as well. Speculation was rife for a while; but finally it simmered down, as sensation will, and people forgot or ceased to talk about it. They forgot Eunice long before she forgot them.

It was six years after this that she returned. Six years may be a day or an eternity. To Eunice it had been both. With the first day in Middleburg, her feet slipped magically into the shoes of the past; she found herself walking the old-time streets, looking into old-time faces, listening for half-forgotten voices, some of them silent forever. For a tragic half-hour she wondered if, after all, her tremendous efforts had been in vain, if it were impossible to shake off the shackles of sex and environment and give vent to the power she knew lay dormant within her. Then, recovering from this brief depression, she looked calmly within herself and saw with relief that the change was there, just as she had hoped. She had grown, developed; now she towered above the town and its people.

She lived narrowly for a long while. With the mean prejudice of small natures, the town nursed its enmity for the woman who was different from the rest of them. Sometimes she found it hard to meet her expenses, now that the insurance money was gone, her children growing up and the inevitable advances of her profession came distressingly often with demands that taxed her resources to the utmost; for she would not fall behind in her development or in the duties she had assumed as citizen and mother. She might have gone elsewhere and become successful at once; she had so strong a personality, so winning a presence that, once acquired, her patients clung to her eternally. But she would not listen to such a suggestion, even when her common sense upheld it. She was determined to conquer Middleburg as she had conquered her difficult calling and the fate that had been meted out to her, the daughter of small-town, orthodox people.

And she did conquer, though the victory did not lie entirely with herself. Middleburg, after a Nirvana of a quarter-century, stirred, wakened and sat up, reaching out its arms. A half-dozen factories came and nestled there; railroads were built and a terminus formed. The town was near enough to great market points to make shipping easy and practicable. In a word, Middleburg was made. It became a small city. The old narrow faces were seen no more; the carping voices were stilled. The Presbyterian church had a tiled roof and a green-velvet carpet; unctuous elders collected in frock coats and silver baskets. Nobody remembered Henry Fabian's name; but when his people sold their farm for a big price and moved away, Eunice remained to garner the fruits of her long sowing.

She lived in the house where she had gone as a bride, and her daughters, just emerging from the schoolgirl age, lived there with her. It is characteristic of children supported by a mother that they ask of her more and oftener than of a father. The Fabian girls soon demanded a new and better house. They wanted an automobile, new furniture, constant streams of new clothes.

They got them all. Eunice Fabian succeeded splendidly with the new element which came in with the factories. Decent, well-paid, respectable people, they adored her and paid for her services with grateful promptness. She struggled and sweated no longer, but even with this tardy recognition of her worth, she had to work night and day to meet the incessant demands of her daughters.

But she was glad to work; she loved it, and bloomed under the stress, like some magnificent, dark-colored rose, absorbing in its petals the entire strength of the parent stem. She was a strong woman, big, beautiful, and calm as any of her confrères. To see her stepping into her honest little coupé any morning at ten—the girls had a better car for their own use—it was hard to believe that she had spent the preceding night ushering into the world the twins of a boss foundryman. She was so clean, so straight and majestic, it was impossible to wear or break her down. The president of the Drovers' Bank, long since forgiving the insurance incident, smiled warmly when her name was mentioned. "A wonderful woman, sir! Strong! Strong as a man! Head clear as a bell and body sound as a rock. One of our most valued clients."

WHY, then, was not Eunice Fabian a happy woman?

Her office was no longer in her home. The Fabian girls could not endure that; the smell of antiseptics made them ill and drowned the odor of the violets which young men were beginning to send. As Eunice's practise increased so that she could keep professional hours, she took a suite of rooms in the Drood Building, a new, ornate marble-and-stucco edifice which housed the Drovers' Bank on its first floor and the cream of Middleburg's breadwinners above. She furnished these rooms with the things she had always longed to possess and never before dared to buy—rugs and pictures, dark and majestic, like herself, and by and by, having a smart new housekeeper in her new smart house to look after the girls, she came to spend more and more time in her rooms, so that when she appeared at home she had almost the air of a visitor. She said with unconscious pathos that she stayed away to relieve the girls of the annoyance of strange people thronging the veranda and calling on the telephone. Actually, she did it so that, for a few pitiful hours that were her own, she could do as she pleased—read, write, smoke, without a dainty chorus of horrified expostulation from Henry Fabian's children.

FOR it had become imperative that she do as she pleased. No nature, however strong or weak, may forever submerge itself in service to others or to an idea without revolt. The long years of sullen, determined work and study, the longer years of unrewarded labor with any object under the sun more important than her own physical comfort had their innings at last, and under the pressure of ceaseless self-abnegation some of her power of resistance began to crumble.

Dr. Valentine Marchall, who was her very good friend, noticed this before she did herself.

"You're driving too fast," he warned her. "You've got to let down. Even we men do that—at times."

"You men!" Eunice sneered in a friendly way. "Do you mean to say that I can't outdo three of you?" Then she grew serious. "You're right, Val, I believe. But it isn't altogether what you think—not all hard work. That doesn't hurt if you have the incentive behind you. But, you see, I haven't it any longer."

He knew. They had talked it over a dozen times. Nobody in Middleburg except Valentine Marchall suspected the real object behind Eunice's herculean labor. She had wanted for her daughters that which had been denied her own girlhood—freedom, both mental and physical, the right to choose with the brain as well as the heart. She had longed to give them this with her own toil, but the dream had evaded her.

"They are just girls," she admitted, with a faint smile. "Neither of them clever. They don't want careers."

Dr. Marchall smoked in silence. He knew that he could do nothing to heal this hurt; but presently he said:

"They will marry. We cannot choose for others. But you must not think of them always and forget yourself. For every disappointment there is a compensation."

She shook her head.

"I wish I could believe that."

"You would not say that if you were not tired." He made a gesture that included the book-lined room. "With all this that you have earned——"

He had the suite adjoining hers, and they were in the habit of dropping in upon each other at all times. There were few reserves between them, and because the Fabian girls hated Val Marchall with the instinctively jealous hatred of the half-orphaned for a danger that threatens their supremacy, Eunice never saw him except at the office. They discussed all sorts of things together as though neither possessed a personality other than a voice.

Valentine Marchall seldom practised. He specialized upon the heart and nerves, and had written some splendid books upon these subjects which brought much fame and no money whatever, and he lived in Middleburg because it was such a magnificent, middle-class place that nobody bothered in the least about their hearts or nerves. Consequently he was not called upon to prescribe and had plenty of time to write about his hobbies and pursue them at his leisure. But occasionally, as an authority upon these interesting and mysterious diseases, he was called upon to journey into the busy haunts of men where nerves are worn to fiddle-strings and hearts are cracked like egg-shells, and there to give expert opinion. And it was then that the influence of Eunice Fabian upon his destinies became apparent; for she always packed him off with stern and minute directions and saw to it that every moment of his time was handsomely paid for.

Valentine Marchall was a gentle scholar. He despised money and the frantic efforts of mankind to get and retain it; but in other respects he was not subnormal. He had known Eunice for many years, and in this time there had grown into his very being a strange emotion that, with all the learned theses to his credit, he could not have analyzed if he had tried. Reduced to fundamentals, it might be said to have been an immense protectiveness, grotesquely unnecessary, fantastically distorted to the casual eye; as she was an Amazon among women both mentally and physcially, so was he the antithesis of all the cruder qualities of his sex. It was absurd that he, slender, retiring, with only the light of caustic humor in his near-sighted eyes to make him akin to the pulse of life, should harbor such a sentiment toward a great, full-blown rose of a woman; but it was true.

He pitied her. To him who knew so much it was a waste, cruel and unnecessary, to behold her full womanhood harrowed and reaped for the cold products of her brain; but he never said this to her, knowing so well her fanatical habit of denial where her own self was concerned.

When he continued to scold her for overdoing, she would scoff: "How mad you are, Val! Don't you know that the day of the cotton-wool woman is over? Even my little girls can dance six hours and play tennis for six more without stopping except to change their frocks. It would be odd indeed if their mother could not go them a few hours better."

He peered at her through the thick lenses that hid the light of tender concern in his eyes.

"The work is all very well; but you've got to think of yourself while you're doing it."

She always scoffed at this. She was always thinking about herself, wasn't she? Trying to get ahead; trying to make money so she could quit some day and build a sure-enough hospital that would suit herself, if no one else. You can't convince a woman who knows all the ins and outs of her own profession and half a dozen others of anything, can you? Valentine Marchall sighed resignedly and gave it up for a time.

IT WAS not long after this that the natural reaction which follows the upgrowth of a town like Middleburg asserted itself. People who worked too hard were tired; those who made much money wished to spend it. Cliques were developed; social strata were evident, and a mad rush for amusement and those who could provide it was instituted in place of the good old-fashioned days when matrons baked bread on Saturday and made over their garments to do another year. Charming young men who could talk pleasingly to women over thirty-five and who knew all the latest dance-steps were popular elements in Middleburg, and the possession of both these faculties brought Monte Matheson from the obscurity where he had languished until now.

Aside from his social talents, his importance was very slight. He was second teller in the Drovers' Bank and boarded at a cheap place on the South Side. He did not drive an automobile in a town where automobiles were as common as noses, and he had to be very careful about his clothes. Only a few people really knew him—his landlady, his laundryman, the people in the bank. Eunice Fabian knew him by sight; but then, in her large, kindly way, she knew everybody.

One evening she met him in her own house. There was a little dancing party there—the dining-room and library were splendid for that—and the girls, Lucile and Cora, insisted that she remain for a while.

Monte Matheson easily dominated the shining floor. In the bank and boarding-house he was meek, subdued, hair carefully parted and brushed; here he was a male Bacchante, his fair hair shining like a crown, his young, lithe body pulsing with motion. He was the Dance.

The girls thronged about him. They were jealous of each other, and little Cora, who was barely seventeen, had no chance at all.

"Never mind, my little one," said Eunice to her youngest born, "your time will come some day."

"But mother,"—Cora's full lips trembled—"I can't wait. I want it now—now! I won't be like—like—you, content to stand outside of everything. And he is so handsome!"

After that, Eunice made her way to the side of the boy of whom yesterday pleasant toleration would have been enough. In a night it had become necessary to sue for his favor.

"You must dance with my little girl," she said, in pretended reproof. "See how sad she looks, how neglected! Because she is only a youngster, you must not forget that she has her rights."

He gave her a challenging look from eyes grown suddenly bold and free. No one had ever looked at Eunice Fabian like that. It was unreal.

"I would rather teach you," he answered promptly. "There are plenty of partners for Cora."

But it did not come to that. Eunice was not a woman who at any extremity of relaxation might find relief in light pleasures. Her soul was too somber and rich for that. She let the boy plead for what the younger women would have given with delight, shaking her head with embarrassed confusion. She felt queerly out of place, self-conscious, in this flutter of youth and lightness. Presently she managed to escape to her office in the Drood Building. It seemed unusually soothing and comforting there, yet she found that she could not settle down to read. The absent music throbbed in her ears.

SHE saw Monte Matheson nearly every day after that, sometimes at the bank where he attended to her daily wants, but more often at home. He was great friends with Lucile and Cora, though the latter pretended to dislike him, childishly cherishing her fancied slight. He always teased Eunice to dance and she always refused, at first with good nature, but later on with hurt brevity that warned him to desist.

In towns like Middleburg it is the custom to regard any woman past thirty as out of the matrimonial orbit, or, if she considers marriage, as an object of derision, of sly speculation—a little mad, perhaps, or not quite modest. In the case of Eunice Fabian this was the more pronounced for the reason that she had voluntarily taken upon herself the responsibility and profession of a man. When the astounding news got about that she had actually married Monte Matheson, it was followed by the faint impression of something irregular. It was as though she had deceived the public about her diploma. Here was a woman who presumed to attend their sick, close the eyes of their dead, bring their young ones into the world, yet betrayed the weakness of humanity in marrying a man who might have been the husband of her daughter. There was something fraudulent about it.

But if the marriage was astounding to the public, it was more than that to Eunice's immediate family. Lucile, in a petulant fit, married her most promising suitor, and little Cora, unable to accustom herself to the condition of having Monte Matheson constantly on hand, insisted upon going away to school. Within a month she determined upon a career. When Eunice read the letter that explained her intention, her firm lips quivered, but she said nothing. She had not yet acquired the habit of talking things over with Monte, and Val was not accessible these days.

The married pair lived in the fine new house that Eunice had built for the Fabian girls and which had never seemed like her own until now. It was not altogether her choice to live there; her inclination was to take a small place for herself and Monte and leave the house for Lucile and Cora and Lucile's new husband. She felt secretly that if this were done, the girls might unbend in that silent, cold attitude which they assumed toward her. But when she broached the plan to Monte, he promptly vetoed it. In five minutes he made her see how ridiculous it was. The house was hers; she had earned it, hadn't she? Well then— He finished by declaring that he meant to see that she got something out of life; she had somebody to look after her now.

Dr. Valentine Marchall saw less of Eunice than he had for years. He had ceased to run in on her at all hours; for now she seemed to have no leisure for the lazy chats that had been their habit. She was always busy; her office was full of people with lugubrious faces, or she was rushing out with her little satchel, trying to pay two calls in the time it took for one. If she read or smoked, it was at her home, where he never went. He read her name, her new name, sometimes in the columns of the Middleburg *Record* when she had been to dinner at somebody's house.

When they met one day, he said to her, with mild reproach,

"You're giving more time to that boy than you ever gave to any one not incurably sick."

She was astonished, and not even her magnificent control could prevent the flush that crept over her face. She had not thought of any one's noticing.

"I—he—he has never had a chance to study. We are reading together this winter."

THAT year made a wonderful difference in Monte Matheson. With his marriage to one of the most regular depositors, he became aggressive in the bank, where he had once addressed every one as "sir." He now wore his hair tossed about and talked confidently. He spent money. He became insufferable. He was watched secretly by other clerks, whom he constantly offended, but nothing to his moral discredit was discovered. He merely tossed money across his window-ledge like dross.

In social circles, among the young persons who craved entertainment, Monte's talents were sadly missed. Middleburg was not so hopelessly old-fashioned that marriage excluded a young benedick from youthful gatherings; but it was manifestly impossible to expect Eunice to join in the natural frivolity of her husband's friends. Monte had to content himself, however unwillingly, with staid dinner-parties where he often met the president of his own bank and talked to him as an equal. Occasionally, at one of these banquets, he heard himself addressed as "Mr. Fabian," and while this annoyed Eunice, it seemed to him rather a good joke.

Monte knew Valentine Marchall. In his own mind he thought of him tolerantly as an elderly fossil, but gradually fell into the habit of talking unreservedly when they met, mainly because the doctor gave the impression of hearing only half of what was said to him. In this way Eunice's friend learned that all was not quite well with the couple.

Monte complained, not bitterly but monotonously:

"I've got forty years to grow old in, don't you see, Doc? And she expects me to bury my nose in a book night after night, when there's something doing all around town——"

He was discontented, just as the Fabian girls had been discontented. Marchall sighed and wondered just why no one got what one wanted from life. He ended his career as confidant by turning hermit and becoming so absorbed in research work that Monte was bored and kept away. But in spite of the reputation he courted, the doctor was a human being and as such possessed ears. He could not help hearing the gossip that from time to time began to float, without beginning or end, from one observer to another.

Monte Matheson had a new car; the one which had belonged to the Fabian girls was rejected as unfit, and Eunice still drove her little coupé, which needed paint badly. Monte's car was a thing of crimson and glitter. When he passed, it was like the rush of wings. It was predicted that he would kill somebody some day; but he never did, and the worst that happened was an occasional fine for speeding, which he paid, grinning.

It was said that Eunice was working herself to death to supply every one with money. Lucile's husband was rather a failure, and Cora's career was proving expensive. Eunice was always calling—calling. There were so many patients that she could only give a little time to each, which made it necessary to return oftener than she would once have done. And for each of these incomplete visits she was paid. Monte, with his training in the bank, saw to that.

Her income was doubled, but no one was displeased. The patients themselves and the persons who paid the bills would remark rather proudly that the illness in their house was serious; the doctor had called twice that day. The bill was going to be enormous.

Eunice did not plan this; it was Monte who suggested it so cleverly that she thought he was protecting her from overwork. She thought only of him and not of the poor people who were paying twice for the privilege of being ill.

But this endless round of sick-beds, the effort to divide herself between her work, which had become income, and Monte, who loved gaiety and sparkle in a woman, were too much. In Eunice, the ripe, abnormal bloom began to fall away. She was not less beautiful, but her beauty began to show the shadow of decay. Her eyes were strained and wistful with the unanswerable questioning of a child; without knowing it, she seemed to be pleading for justification. There was doubt beyond the question that was never put into words. Only her eyes said, "Does he love me?"

"You are working yourself to death," Marchall said to her for the hundredth time. "Why don't you go away somewhere? Take a rest."

"Go away? With summer coming and the babies and the nettle-rash to deal with? Never! You know I love my work. It is all relaxation and joy to me. Always new. When I took off the Simpson boy's leg last week——"

But this was not true, and he knew it, even if she refused to admit that he was right. However, if she must rest, she could give up the dinners, and she and Monte would stay quietly at home on the evenings they had allotted to this dubious amusement. Thereafter the name of Matheson ceased to appear in the dinner-record of the paper; but while Eunice stayed at home when her patients would let her, Monte did not remain beside her.

"His hours are so confining. He loves his car. He gets so little time to drive except at night," Eunice explained carefully; but in her eyes was the mute, agonizing pain of a secret and devastating wound.

She ceased to wear good-looking clothes, or even to groom herself with her usual care. Sometimes her hair looked rough and unbrushed, as though she were impatient of the time lost in arranging it. She had no time for anything except patients, and rigorously, the first of every month, the bills went out for collection.

MONTE gave up his position in the bank and took over the agency for a new and expensive car of which his own was a model. He was looking ahead even of this when he spoke of establishing an aviation field. "Motion!" he would cry, with his elbows out as though he wanted to fly himself. "Give me motion!"

"He wants to invent something," Eunice explained. "He had to have leisure to work it out. Something about engines. I never could understand them."

Monte's new work kept him away from home nearly all the time, but it was unnecessary to make excuses for this. He talked of "prospects" who lived at huge distances. The agency and the invention took a great deal of money, and when Lucile's husband asked for some and it was not forthcoming, she became hateful.

"Do all of Monte's 'prospects' have yellow hair and doll-baby faces?" she asked scornfully.

Eunice began to fall into her old habit of staying late at the office. She had her dinner down-town at times, for with Monte at home so seldom, it hardly seemed worth while to go there. She would even drift into Marchall's office occasionally and sit there without talking much. When an article was published about her, describing a marvelous operation she had performed, she showed no pride.

"Why should I be proud? It was not creative. I learned it all from others"—as if in Marchall's praise she read a vague discountenancing of her inventor.

One hot summer night he found her sitting listlessly before his desk, turning some papers in her hands, and before he could speak, she began:

"Have you done well this year, Val? It's funny. I've been going over accounts and I can't see where the money's gone. I've done twice the work, but there's hardly anything——"

"I happen to know that you've made a splendid income," said Marchall dryly, "more than you used to earn in five years."

"Is that true?" For a moment she looked childishly pleased, then dropped her eyes guiltily. "But of course it costs more to live than it did. Cora's education is expensive——"

"Do you need money?" he asked harshly.

But she was not listening. The door of her own office across the hall slammed noisily. Monte's voice called:

"Eunice! Eunice!"

Marchall waited a long time for her to return. He tried to read, to think, but he was gnawed by cruel thoughts of what his duty must be. He seemed to hear voices, dim whispers of sound that found their way through brick and mortar to his ears, the agonizing whisper of voices tuned to terrible accusation, remorse and pleading, without words to distinguish these emotions.

When he resolved to endure it no longer, it was too late for escape. He heard Monte's footsteps in the hall; his voice melted to an astonishing degree of gay tenderness in a triumphant leave-taking, and then Eunice returned.

He pretended not to see her exhausted face, but he could barely conceal his distaste when she began to speak in a high, unnatural voice.

"Well, it is all over. I am to be the wife of a successful man, it seems. Monte has won, just as he said he would. The patent is perfected, and to-morrow he starts for Washington——"

"How much did you give him this time?"

"Five thousand. It was all I had. Don't scold me, Val, if I don't take a holiday this summer. By fall I can give up work if I wish."

Nothing could have been plainer. She spoke of "giving up" her profession; he wanted to remind her that she had already given it up.

BUT Monte did not go to Washington next day. He was never to go anywhere again, because for once the doleful prognostication of the killjoy public was proven to be true. There was a heavy ground-fog that night, and sometime between twelve o'clock and morning the red racing car was found out on the Centerfield road, and underneath it the unsatisfactory remnants of poor Monte which only a wife could find tears for.

Dr. Valentine Marchall went to her at once. In her house there was none of the panoply of grief that usually surrounds death. The neighbors had been excluded, and all the shades were gaily up and the windows open to the summer air.

He expected despair, but he found her entirely calm and behaving in a sane, normal manner. Amazingly she was about some household task that seemed strange in her hands. It was no more than folding linen, but he had never seen her do that before. When their eyes met, he saw that hers were calm and unclouded and that their eternal question was missing.

He was so sorry for her that he began to speak bruskly at once of her duty to the public—the place she filled in the community, naming with fierce inistency the reasons why she must not let the calamity overwhelm her, and all the time he despised himself, knowing very well that to his secret self Monte Matheson's death appeared in no way a calamity.

But to all this she merely shook her head with a grave smile. Then, with quiet finality that left no doubt of her decision, she told him that the public would have to do without her in the future. She was through.

Val echoed her.

"Through?"

"Yes," said Eunice. "It is all over." She sighed deeply, as though relieving her full breast from some incalculable burden. The things she was folding away were all Monte's—handkerchiefs and ties and the like; there was a vast number of them, and smoothing each fold with lingering care all that had characterized her became merged into the purely maternal. The soft house gown she wore, the falling hair helped with this illusion, and Marchall's heart ached with a sudden sense of loss—a loss far greater than when their friendly intimacy had first been broken.

"You see," she said, with her little smile, "it has been brought home to me at last that I am a woman. How many times you have reminded me of that! But though you are very wise, dear friend, you did not tell me the truth that I had to find out for myself. I am a woman, and, for my life to be complete, I must have love. You did not tell me that.

"How blind I was at first! It was as you said. I had driven myself too hard. I was a living thing, after all, and not the machine I had trained myself to seem. One day I woke to the realization of life. No one had ever really loved me. My children were all-sufficient to themselves. In trying to give them everything, I had not taken time to win their hearts—and there was no one else. The hunger was there—and he came——"

She paused. He thought that she was overcome by the memory of that time, but when he saw her face it was transfigured. In some clairvoyance of vision, youth looked for a moment through the devastation of years. She went on softly:

"What must have seemed impossible to others was very true. He loved me—we loved each other—and that is why everything else had become worthless to me. I am a woman—a woman—and I have not learned the deep truth of what it means to be a woman until too late. You see—all the hours I spent in work and study I might have had for loving him—for steeping myself in the glory of his love that was mine—mine——"

He could not conceal his amazed incredulity, but she did not resent this.

"Of course I doubted him at times," she said simply. "Love is like that. For years and years you may grope blindfolded, seeing only distorted visions instead of real objects; then suddenly you are in the light. It was like that with me. In the midst of intolerable pain I found my joy. In losing him my solace is the happiness he bequeathed me with his last words. What more can I take from life than happiness—and, my friend, I have that."

His eyes questioned her.

"The lips of the dying do not lie," she said solemnly. "I, who have sat by a hundred death-beds, know that is true. They said—about him—that when they lifted him and when he saw their faces bending over him, he spoke one word over and over again. It was my name. 'Eunice! Eunice!' Do you understand? He died wanting me, calling me. He must have loved me."

Val had nothing to say to that. When he went back to his office, he found the attendant displaying nerves over a tablet full of urgent calls. Eunice's patients, resenting death and trouble from any quarter except their own, were indignantly demanding him as substitute. Miss Mason showed him a name and address repeated three times, and over it their eyes met significantly.

When Dr. Marchall's car stopped before the shabby red house three miles out on the Centerfield pike, a woman with a brown shawl over her head came running out to meet him. She was one of those once-pretty women whom not even neglect and grieving and petty sorrows can quite change. At sight of the doctor her face lighted with intense relief and confidence. She waited while he braked the car and got his little old-fashioned case of medicines from the pocket; and after that she walked beside him to the house, explaining her trouble with childish garrulity.

"When she was first took, I called every doctor in town; but they was all busy and at last I thought perhaps you'd come, seein' we were all near crazy with her carryin'-on." She paused for breath, and he looked at her with patient expectation. "Yesterday, when she begun with screamin' hysterics, I supposed it was something gone wrong with her trip." She gave him a sly, oblique glance which he pretended not to see. "My daughter's a city milliner, sir, and she'd planned on taking a nice, long trip around by Washington, before she went back to Chicago. Then yesterday she was taken sick, right after they found that young feller smashed to pieces down the road. It must be something to do with the shock of seeing the ambulance going past here in place of that pretty red car. My Eunice always had a sympathizin' nature."

# Difference

## By Anne Herendeen

YOUR sleek and tailored railroad trains
Have tracks to bring them home;
Deep in the sea, my laughing ships
Carve their own tracks of foam.

And be they great or be they small,
Be their ports near or far,
Carve as they may, the sea laughs back
And smooths away the scar.

Upon their certain shining tracks
Your trains return to you;
But my ships, struggling back to me,
Blaze every trail anew.

# The Anglophile

*You've Met a Number of Persons Whose Obvious Shame for Their Own Country Amused or Bored You. Perhaps You Had Difficulty in Refraining from Organizing a Spanking Party. Well, Here's One of 'Em*

## By Gene Markey

CHESTER POSTLETHWAITE was enormously fond of everything pertaining to England and the English. It was his wont to argue that Englishmen were better governed, better mannered, better dressed, and in every way superior to Americans. The Volstead Act was his most devastating argument.

Occasionally one of his friends, exasperated, would turn upon him with,

"Well then, why don't you *go* to England?"

"I intend to," Chester would reply, "just as soon as this epidemic of American tourists is over."

The Postlethwaites were rich and dwelt in Levelston, which is Chicago's most smug and self-satisfied suburb. Originally the family had been English. Grandfather Postlethwaite had left the old country hurriedly one evening, and somehow never cared to explain the reason why—always seemed upset, in fact, when questioned on the subject. But no matter. The important fact is that he migrated to Chicago, invented a peanut-roaster and became so wealthy that no one ever dared ask him why he had left England.

Before the demise of this worthy it had been a favorite prank of small boys in the neighborhood to lie in ambush when he passed and whistle so realistically like peanut-roasters that the old gentleman would start violently. But that is neither here nor there. This chronicle concerns itself with the scion of the peanut-roaster dynasty, young Chester Postlethwaite.

Surely no more complete Anglophile ever existed. Nothing would do but Chester must have all his clothes from London—hats, suits, top-coats, even boots and shoes. He smoked an English pipe, and to see him strolling—not without a certain swagger—down Michigan Avenue in Chicago, one would have at once associated him with Bond Street and Piccadilly.

Forsooth he never mounted a horse unless it bore an English saddle. In restaurants he demanded English mustard, and whenever he breakfasted at a club or hotel, an English mutton chop was the *pièce de résistance*. When tea-time came of an afternoon, he would saunter elegantly into the Blackstone and order English-breakfast tea, marmalade and English muffins. On Sundays, Mrs. Postlethwaite attended service at St. Mark's in Levelston. It was the Episcopal church, but Chester insisted on referring to it as the "Church of England." At billiards he was always delighted when some one told him he had put "too much English" on a shot. Infinitely preferable, thought he, to have too much English than not enough. A marked fondness he showed for English sparrows, and, according to his friends, such was the extent of his Anglomania that he would not go fishing because he could not bear the thought of putting an angleworm on a hook.

Some one once told him that he resembled the Prince of Wales, and from that moment forth Chester combed his hair in the Wales manner, and for his sartorial effects followed closely newspaper pictures of the royal youth.

But it was in matters of the heart that his mania took its most pronounced turn.

"I shall never marry any of these girls around here," he would tell his fond mamma, whenever the subject came up for discussion. "When *I* marry, it will be an English girl."

"But Chester," the good lady would expostulate, "you're an American. You——"

Somehow it always annoyed him to be told that he was an American.

"I don't care," he retorted one day. "It isn't *my* fault. If grandfather had stayed in England——"

Mrs. Postlethwaite cocked a hasty eye up at the ceiling. She had an idea that grandfather Postlethwaite had left England just two jumps ahead of the constables. But that, or course, was merely her private opinion.

"What I'm going to do," confided Chester, "is dash over there one of these days and carry off the daughter of a duke or a lord."

Already he was visualizing the newspaper head-lines that would chronicle such a procedure:

CHICAGO BOY WEDS TITLED BEAUTY

Grandson of J. B. Postlethwaite marries Lady Violet Somebody-or-other.

This, indeed, was one of his pleasantest dreams. He never seemed to tire of conjuring up, in his mind's eye, the "titled beauty" with whom he should one day saunter down a cathedral aisle. It was even maintained by certain Levelston ladies who possessed marriageable daughters that the heir to the Postlethwaite millions indulged in the practise of clipping from English periodicals pictures of pretty English girls, in view (said they) of selecting an eligible bride. This bit of gossip was, however, never substantiated, though he *did* subscribe to no less than a dozen English magazines.

And, curiously enough, our young Anglophile had never set foot in England. Something had always prevented his accompanying mamma and papa Postlethwaite on their European trips. Once it had been the whooping-cough, another time scarlet fever, and another time mathematics that had to be "made up" before he could enter Dartmouth in the fall. Later, a certain war intervened, and the result was that Chester had never seen his beloved England.

It was rather unfortunate, in a way, too. Whereas there *was* a certain something about exhibiting a hat or a walking-stick that had come from London, 'twould have been much jollier were he able to speak intimately of things English—first-hand knowledge, not gleaned from books or magazines.

And in the course of time he convinced himself that he must go to England—in spite of the vast horde of American tourists that were overrunning the sacred soil.

Parental consent and an unlimited letter of credit being arranged without much ado, he set about elaborate preparations. From Mrs. Frizzle, a lady whose name frequently graced the society columns of the Chicago papers, he secured letters of introduction to a duke, a countess, a baronet and a poet. These letters, he felt, would be his "open sesame" to English fashionable circles. Meanwhile he superintended the packing of numerous trunks, which, in the English manner, he referred to as "boxes," engaged passage on an English boat, and spent much time teaching himself to pronounce "been" as if it were "bean" (in Levelston people said "bin"), and to slur properly such words as "milit'ry," "secret'ry," and so forth. Quite naturally he did not wish his speech to brand him as an American.

AT LENGTH all preparations were completed, and bidding an affectionate farewell to his parents, a none too affectionate farewell to smug Levelston and grimy Chicago, he departed for New York. Two days later his caravan of luggage was aboard the R. M. S. *Plutocratic*, and Chester himself established in a luxurious Louis XIV suite on that giant liner.

For an hour before sailing-time a rabble on the pier cheered mightily, and the second-class passengers, swarming aft, cheered in return. Then a band played, and the *Plutocratic*, escorted by a flotilla of tugs, drew haughtily away from Chester's native land. Standing by the rail, he grinned sardonically at the Statue of Liberty.

"It'll be a long time, old girl," he said, "before I see *you* again."

And thrusting his hands in his pockets, he retired cabinward, to practise "bean," "secret'ry" and "milit'ry" on the English steward. As he strode down the deck, a curious sense of exuberance seemed to possess his spirit. This was to be no mere ocean voyage, no mere trip abroad—it was, rather, a pilgrimage. For a long time had he revered all things English. His dress, his conversation, matrimonial aspirations—in short, his very existence—had been a series of salaams and acknowledgments of the superiority of that small island whence had come his late lamented grandfather. At last he was to have an opportunity to sojourn on that magic isle and do all the things he had dreamed of doing—swagger down Piccadilly, dine with dukes, dance with duchesses and—who could gainsay him?—perhaps acquire from some English garden a fair flower with whom to share his income tax. Nor was this last any minor consideration. He resolved to carry around with him at all times a copy of "Burke's Peerage."

Long had he embellished his conversation with references to "Merry England," the land of roast beef and hawthorn hedges, fox-hunting, ale and titled beauties. And now, by Jove, he was on his way to Merry England! Cheeri-o, and all that sort of thing!

IT WAS a somewhat subdued Chester who crawled from the Southampton train in Waterloo Station a week later. Pale he was, and hollow-eyed, and his knees were shaky. The crossing had been anything but tranquil. Before the *Plutocratic* passed Sandy Hook, a most unpleasant attack of *mal de mer* had laid him low, and he had not appeared on deck again until time to go ashore. This wretchedness having occurred on an English ship, he was, for the first time, assailed by a doubt as to the superiority of the English.

Looking round in the station, he ascertained that a straggling column of porters followed with half his luggage; the other half was—heaven knew where. But Chester was too weak to investigate, and, clutching his stick, tottered out of the station—into a downpour of rain. The street was quite dark, and at the curb a formidable array of cabmen bayed raucously.

So this was London!

A chill stream of water dripped from his hat onto his nose; another chill stream was running down his neck. With vague misgivings he almost wished himself back in Levelston. Pusillanimous thought! Then a swarm of hoarse-voiced men were stuffing him into a taxi.

"To the Savoy," he groaned, and after a series of malicious jerks the cab got under way.

At that excellent hostelry, after seeing all his luggage unloaded, our hero suffered a distinct shock. A granite-faced clerk informed him that there was not a room to be had. Dismally he retreated into the rain, crawled into another (and even more dilapidated) taxi, and had his cargo of belongings stowed in after him.

"To the Cecil," he directed half-heartedly.

At the Cecil he learned again—and to his greater disappointment—that there was no room to be had. At the Carlton it was the same—and at the Metropole. The thousands of American tourists had apparently taken possession of everything.

"If it's an 'otel yer wants," vouchsafed the cockney cabman, "I knows of a proper 'otel, sir."

"Then take me there," moaned Chester, "before I collapse."

"Right-o!" agreed the cockney, and with a great clatter they once more set off.

Gidgin's Hotel was a dingy structure squatting in Craven Street between the Strand and the Thames Embankment. After much parleying, accommodations were secured for the young American gentleman, who had to be fairly lifted up four flights of stairs. Gidgin's Hotel was not encumbered with elevators or with modern plumbing, as the young American gentleman soon learned to his discomfiture—but at length he found himself in the gloomy chamber to which he had been assigned.

Alas and likewise alackaday! Nowhere to be found were the white-tile and porcelain baths of his inferior America. Instead, an ancient and angular maid servant fetched in a tub—a little tin tub with handles, such as had been employed for his ablutions at the age of six months—full of scalding hot water.

And thus began his residence in Merry England!

*Everybody's Magazine, May, 1922*

For the next five days the rain poured down with dismal persistence. Each time Chester ventured forth he was able to see nothing but a procession of umbrellas, and returned, drenched and disheartened, to the gloom of Gidgin's Hotel.

On the sixth day the rain ceased, but on its heels down rolled a murky yellow fog that obscured everything and rendered even venturing forth impossible. With a somewhat shaken Anglomania, our young gentleman fidgeted in his cheerless chamber, smoked until his tongue burned, and perused stacks of English journals. In several of these he came across articles and book-reviews that sneered and jeered at his native land. A fortnight before he would have agreed with them. To-day he frowned slightly.

But after a dreary time the fog lifted, and, arraying himself in his Bond Street best, Chester sallied forth to see the town.

London, he found, was like Boston—only more so. Old buildings. Crooked streets. Old gentlemen in top-hats. Incredible little page-boys in musical-comedy pill-box hats. Lumbering 'buses and battered cabs. A dull sky that promised to seep more rain.

During his weather quarantine he had dispatched Mrs. Frizzle's letters of introduction—one to the Duke of Snafflebit, one to the Countess of Clinkington, one to Sir Jeremy Boggle, and one to Lionel Gillingwater, the poet. In reply to which had come a chill communication from the last-named gentleman. Mr. Lionel Gillingwater would see Mr. Postlethwaite at four that afternoon at his lodgings in Cheyne Walk, Chelsea. And thither Mr. Postlethwaite was repairing.

In the Strand he hailed a taxi, and just as he was stepping into it, a shiny green limousine, with arms emblazoned on the door, drew up at the curb. Down hopped a footman in green livery; the door was flung open and out stepped the loveliest girl Chester had ever looked upon. She was swathed in chinchilla, and he caught only a fleeting glance of a wisp of blond hair, two very blue eyes and a radiant English complexion.

Here, he told himself, staring after her, was *the* girl. And such a girl! But even as he gave himself up to these sweet reflections, she had disappeared inside a lace shop, and his taxi jolted forward. If only he could have met her——

Mr. Lionel Gillingwater, the poet, was a bald, asthmatic fat man, wearing baggy tweeds and a superior manner. On Chester's entrance he put forth a clammy hand and muttered something about the weather. After they were seated, he fell to twiddling his thumbs and staring out the window.

"Mrs. Frizzle's letter," he wheezed patronizingly at length, "informs me you are from America."

"Yes," said Chester; "Chicago."

"Chicago—Chicago—I believe I was there on my lecture tour. It's in Nebraska, isn't it?"

"Illinois," corrected Chester gently.

"Ah, yes. I knew it was one of those places."

A *gauche* silence, while the thumbs twiddled. After a bit, an unsuccessful attempt at conversation on the part of Chester. Then some bitter tea. Silence again.

"Did—did you like America?" ventured Chester uncomfortably.

"Like it? *Hor*-rible place! Hope I shall never have to go there again."

"But," said Chester, beginning to feel the sting of Anglo-superiority, "I dare say you made plenty of money out of it."

"Money? Oh, yes. But there's no culture there. No culture. Dear me—dreadful place!" The thumbs twiddled with increased tempo, and the fat poet continued to stare out the window.

Five o'clock chimed. Chester rose hastily, and with false protestations of pleasure at the meeting, took his departure.

NEXT morning his mail included a large square envelope bearing the strawberry leaves of a duke. His Grace the Duke of Snafflebit, said the note (written and signed by some under-secretary) would see Mr. Postlewhite (name misspelled) at eleven o'clock at the Sarcophagus Club.

The attitude of the poet Gillingwater, reflected Chester, had been anything but cordial to Americans. But the duke—ah, the duke would be different! Think of it, by Jove, to meet a real live duke! Perhaps his Grace would ask him to luncheon.

At a quarter to eleven—for he did not wish to be late—servants of lordly mien admitted him to the Sarcophagus Club and bade him wait in a severe room off the library. Eleven sounded on a solemn clock. No duke. Eleven-fifteen. Eleven-thirty.

Appeared then a shriveled, sour-visaged little man in a brown wig and brown suit, blowing his nose vigorously.

"Mr. Pottlebait?" he demanded sharply.

"Postlethwaite, sir—I mean, your Grace," stammered Chester—then instantly remembered that he should address this personage as "Duke."

"Never remember names," snapped the little man, continuing to blow his nose. "Sit down."

Abruptly Chester sat down. The duke sat down, too.

"You're an American?"

Chester admitted that he was.

"What part of America?"

"Chicago."

"Never heard of it!" snapped the duke.

Chester stirred uneasily. This was infinitely worse than the third degree.

"It's our second largest city," he began feebly.

"Wait! *Have* heard of Chicago. Indian word for stock-yards, isn't it?"

Chester didn't know.

"It's in Ohio."

"No, sir—I mean Duke. Illinois."

The little man glared at him. Chester felt that Chicago *should* have been in Ohio.

Having finished blowing his nose, his grace produced a thick gold watch, snapped it open and snapped it shut.

"Twenty minutes of twelve!" he exclaimed, in the tone of a man who has overslept. "Must be going." He jumped up and gave Chester two fingers to shake. "*Good*-by, Mr. Postlepate." And walked jerkily away.

Our young gentleman, with a relieved sigh, made his escape. The interview had lasted but ten minutes, yet never had he spent a more uncomfortable time. His Anglomania was rapidly waning.

THE afternoon's mail brought a reply from his third letter of introduction. The Countess of Clinkington desired his presence next day at tea at Clinkington House, Berkeley Square. "Ah," thought Chester, "here, at last, is the real thing!" Perhaps the countess would be beautiful. At any rate, she would not snub him—as had the fat poet and the dreadful duke.

That evening he witnessed a performance of London's reigning theatrical hit—a revue so dull that it would not have lasted a week on Broadway. One good American jazz tune would have improved it no end. Chester sighed. When he left the theatre it was raining again, but as he drove alone back to Gidgin's Hotel, a vision of the girl of the limousine brightened up his thoughts. What a beauty she was! The damsel of his dreams! If only he could meet her——

At five o'clock next afternoon, a top-hatted Chester, resplendent in afternoon attire, hopefully punched the bell at Clinkington House in Berkeley Square. A supercilious footman admitted him, took his hat, gloves and stick, and piloted him down a silent hallway. Pausing before a closed door, he whispered,

"Wot nyme, sir?"

"Mr. Postlethwaite," Chester whispered back. Apparently it was a secret.

The footman cautiously opened the door.

"Mr. Possilwyte," he whispered, and stepped aside.

It was a gloomy, high-ceiled Victorian room in which our young gentleman found himself. On a gilt settle before him sprawled an enormous fat woman—with hennaed hair and a pale, flabby face—gowned in voluminous green velvet. She was gotten up, thought Chester, strikingly like a plush horse.

"How d'you do," she whispered, "Mr. ——" The name was lost on thin air.

Chester bowed low and grasped her proffered finger. Even the duke had given him two.

"I am charmed, Countess," he whispered. Whispering seemed the accepted thing in this house, and he resolved not to be outdone.

"You are from America?" whispered the countess.

"Yes-s-s."

"Do you live at Newport?"

"No, Countess. Chicago."

"Oh," she whispered. "Chicago. That's in the state of Buffalo, isn't it?"

Whereupon he undertook a whispered exegesis of Chicago's geographical location, but the great lady paid no attention to him. The whispering footman was bringing tea. Silence.

"One lump, Mr. ——" Again the name was lost.

"Two, please."

"Cream, of course?"

"No, thank you," he whispered.

"What!" — a shocked whisper. "No cream?"

"N-no, thank you." Chester squirmed. Apparently this was a grievous *faux pas*.

Sitting up stiffly and looking more than ever like a green-plush horse, the countess drank her tea. Our young gentleman essayed a swallow of his. It was very weak, and so hot that it scalded his tonsils.

"You said you lived at Newport?" she was whispering.

"No," he whispered back; "Chicago."

"I was at Newport once—in 1881."

"Yes?"

"But I don't care for America."

"No?"

"America is too noisy," she whispered, "much too noisy."

Ye gods! This eternal whispering would drive him mad. The place was like a tomb. He would have been enormously grateful for a burst of good old American noise.

"Yes," she whispered again; "America is much too noisy."

Chester experienced an uncomfortable feeling that he, too, was not as quiet as he should be, and after a difficult twenty minutes rose, bade the lady a whispered adieu and tiptoed out. The whispering footman handed him his top-hat, gloves and stick, and closed the door after him—softly.

In the street Chester had a wild desire to shout. His Anglomania was now more mania than Anglo.

IF THIS were a tale merely pointing out the disillusionment of a young Anglophile, a proper conclusion would be a scene showing Chester Postlethwaite standing atop the counter of the Alhambra Bar, defiantly waving an American flag. But our chronicle ends not that way.

When Chester woke next morning, his heart was heavy as the fog that drifted in through his open window. What a fiasco, he reflected gloomily, this English pilgrimage had been! On every side people had made him feel that an American was a distinctly inferior being—a sort of cross between a worm and a poor relation. Every one he had met thus far had snubbed him. England was not the perfect place he had anticipated. His last ideal had been punctured when he discovered that *belted* earls wore *suspenders!*

Had he followed his first inclination that morning, he would have dispatched a messenger at once to the Green Star Line to procure passage home, yet even as he contemplated this procedure, splashing clumsily in his diminutive tub, a knock sounded on the door and into his hands was thrust a cheery yellow envelope.

Sir Jeremy Boggle, said the enclosed note, desired exceedingly that Mr. Postlethwaite come to them for the week-end. Any friend of Mrs. Frizzle's, and so forth, and so forth. The address was Boggle Manor, Clumps, Upson Downs, Sputterleigh. It didn't sound enough——

Chester had almost forgotten Mrs. Frizzle's letter to Sir Jeremy Boggle, and here the reply was the most cordial he had yet received. An invitation for the week-end. Well, he would go.

Boggle Manor was a rambling, ivy-covered house of ancient brick, with dozens of chimney-pots protruding from every angle of the roof. 'Twas set in a pretty park, and as Chester alighted from the shining red motor which had met him at Upson Downs, a great troop of people suddenly descended upon him—led by a bustling, bald, plethoric little man in shooting-tweeds, who wrung Chester's hand effusively and introduced himself as Sir Jeremy. Behind him came a smiling fat woman in a fussy purple gown, Lady Boggle, followed by two plump and unattractive Miss Boggles, and a covey of maids and footmen all squabbling over the guest's luggage.

This clamorous welcome quite overcame our young gentleman, who, up to this time, had been accorded only the most frigid of English receptions. And ere he had time to recover from his amazement, they were steering him into the great hall, Sir Jeremy on one side, Lady Boggle on the other, the Miss Boggles ahead, and the covey of maids and footmen following.

And in that moment Chester perceived that the Boggles spoke with a marked cockney accent, and it flashed across his mind that they represented England's new rich—of which he had heard so much. 'Twas the knighting of such men as Sir Jeremy that caused people to refer to London as the City of Dreadful Knights.

In the ancestral hall (which, beyond a doubt, had been built by some one else's ancestors) they surrounded him, all talking at once.

"A gryte honor, Mr. Postlethwyte," Sir Jeremy was saying. "Welcome to Boggle Manor!"

"If it's ridin' 'e likes," offered one of the Miss Boggles, "our stybles 'as got some 'igh-priced 'orses——"

"Maybe," put in her sister, " 'e'd rather ply tennis on the new tennis-courts."

"La, girls!" shrilled Lady Boggle. " 'Ow you do go on! Let the young gent alone. Jerry—'ear me now—I should sy, *Sir* Jeremy, 'ave the butler con-duct Mr. Postelthwyte to 'is room."

"Right-o, ducky!" beamed Sir Jeremy, and turned to a haughty, red-faced personage in mulberry livery. " 'Awkins," he said timidly, "er—will you be so good as to show our guest hup?"

It was obvious that the Boggles stood in awe of their butler.

With his mind in a daze, Chester meekly followed the mulberry livery up a broad staircase, and, once inside his room, collapsed upon the canopied bed.

"Dinner, sir," observed the haughty 'Awkins, "is at seven. Will you have your tea here, sir?"

"Anything!" wailed our hero. "I don't care."

AT SEVEN, as he drew on his dinner coat and half-heartedly surveyed his appearance in the pier-glass, young Mr. Postlethwaite's spirits were very low. His newly rich hosts, who, it was safe to bet, had formerly dwelt in Bloomsbury, acted as if he were the first guest they had ever been able to lure down to their acquired seat. So energetic were they in their welcome that his mind wavered as to whether, after all, it were not better to be snubbed than set upon in this vulgar fashion. Why was it that such frightful luck pursued him all over England?

But, as he descended the stairs, his eye fell upon something in the drawing-room that made him instantly forget bad luck and the cockney Boggles. For there, standing in conversation with Sir Jeremy, was the girl he had seen in the green limousine!

"Another guest!" cried Sir Jeremy, as Chester approached. "Miss Romney, shyke 'ands with Mr. Postlethwyte!"

Miss Romney did nothing of the kind, but her very lovely eyes smiled, and in the perfect English of Mayfair she said,

"How d'you do?"

Chester, with admiration in his eyes, bowed low. And from that moment he was lost—hopelessly, irrevocably lost.

Lady Boggle soon swept in, gowned in coruscating jet, followed by the Miss Boggles in pink evening frocks. Then 'Awkins appeared and condescendingly announced dinner, and the little party passed along to a vast dining-room glittering with electric lights.

Under ordinary circumstances 'twould have been the most stupid of dinners, but Fortune, which had dealt with Chester so scurvily since his arrival in England, favored him to-night, and he found himself seated next to Diana Romney, whose smile was so enchanting and whose cultured accent bespoke the English damsel of his dreams.

And if these young people found each other more than interesting—to the exclusion of their hosts—let us forgive them generously. Youth, as some one once sagely observed, will be served, and love at first sight doesn't occur every day. As for the Boggles, they seemed not to mind, and held a jolly little Bloomsbury conversation among themselves.

Indeed, so rapidly did the affair develop that ere the salad arrived Chester was wondering if Diana would marry him. Then Sir Jeremy's jovial voice interrupted.

"Mr. Postlethwyte," he ventured, "do you fancy ridin' to 'ounds, sir?"

"We've all tyken it hup," put in Lady Boggle. "Me and the girls. An' 'ow we do enjoy it!"

Now, Chester had never ridden to hounds, but he knew that such an admission would put him at a decided disadvantage.

"I'm very keen for it," he answered, and turned to Diana.

"Are you?"

"Oh," smiled Diana, "I adore hunting."

"Then it's all arranged," beamed Sir Jeremy. "We 'ave our own 'ounds 'ere—an' they meet to-morrer mornin' at sunrise."

'Twas a fine hunting morning, crisply cool, with the first sun Chester had seen since he set foot in England. The meeting of the Boggle hounds was not precisely a fashionable event. It consisted of a great uproar and a spirited array of prancing horses, grooms, guests, beagles and Boggles.

Chester had only time for a moment's conversation with Diana, but from the happy light that came into her English eyes, it was evident that what he said pleased her mmeasurably. He had never seen her so beautiful. In her hunting habit and pink coat she was superb.

To be sure, our hero cut no dashing figure in his borrowed "pinks," but Diana's smile was all that mattered, anyway, and with a pounding heart he clambered atop the huge, snorting hunter that had been provided for him. At once his troubles started, for the creature began to dance about in a most alarming manner. Then a horn blew; the hounds bayed; every one shouted—and they were off!

Down a narrow lane they went, Chester's giraffelike steed galloping well to the front. Ahead, he beheld Diana's mount rise gracefully over a gate. How magnificently she rode! But his own animal was acting up and gave him scant time to admire the scenery. It was all he could do to cling in the saddle. This sort of thing was vastly different from riding in Lincoln Park.

At the first gate he lost his hat, and at the second his horse. The creature, however, seemed not disposed to frolic away, but halted and waited patiently for him to pick himself up and remount. Which he managed to do—gingerly. By this time the baying of the pack came fainter and fainter, for the rest of the field were far ahead. And Chester heartily wished himself back home. In that wretched moment all his admiration for things English vanished forever.

Yet there was Diana! Clapping spurs to the hunter, he plunged on.

It proved, all in all, a ghastly experience. But there was no stopping the horse. Sometimes, by miraculous luck, they took a fence together. Sometimes Chester jumped and the horse did not. Sometimes the horse jumped and Chester did not. At any event, more dead than alive, he galloped in an hour after the hunt had ended, and fell off for the last time. Stiff, sore and ashamed, he crept up to his room and rang for a bottle of liniment.

It was all over. He was disgraced. With an aching heart—indeed, there was scarce any part of him that did not ache—he cursed the day he had ever left America. Diana would never speak to him again—it was this thought of Diana that made the whole thing so much worse. For he knew perfectly well now that she was the only girl in the world.

ALL the clocks in Boggle Manor had struck ten, and Chester Postlethwaite was standing alone on the terrace, gazing bitterly up at the stars. All day he had shamedly kept to his room, not even descending for dinner. He was, he assured himself, the most miserable of men, and his mind was quite made up to steal away in the morning before any one was astir. Of course it would nearly kill him to leave without seeing Diana, but——

"Why have you avoided me so?" 'Twas *her* voice behind him.

"Oh!" he started, and swallowed hard.

"After what you said this morning—" The tone was reproachful.

"I—I didn't think," he stammered unhappily, "you'd want to see me again."

"What a funny boy! I don't understand."

"I made such a—such an ass of myself this morning——"

"I didn't notice—I was riding ahead. You probably had a bad horse."

"No," he muttered; "it's just that I don't make an Englishman—and I never will!" Then a great wrath flared up within him. "I'd give *anything*," he spluttered, "if I were right now on a boat bound for America!"

"So would I," said Diana quietly.

"But you," he gasped, "you *live* in England!"

"*I?*"

"Why—yes!"

"I went to school here, and I've an uncle living in London—that's how I knew the Boggles. But my home is in Indianapolis."

"*What?*"

"Um-hm. Indianapolis."

Chester choked and, clutching her hand, fell upon his knees.

"Say it again!" he implored.

"Indianapolis."

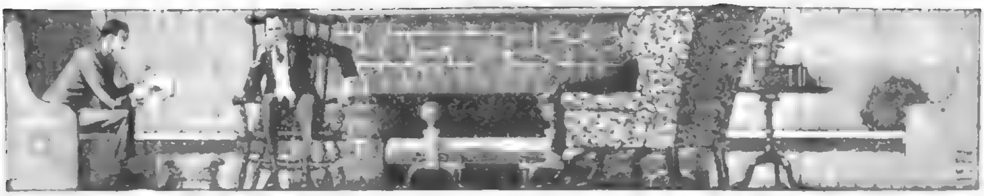
"*Yow-ie!*"

"Chester!" she cried. "What in the world is the matter with you?"

"Oh, it's too good to be true! Indianapolis! Thank God! There is nothing more American than Indianapolis!"

"Tell me what you're so incoherent about."

"Not now," exulted Chester. "But I *will* tell you some one who's going to be kissed—this minute!"



# Everybody's Chimney Corner

## *Where Reader, Author and Editor Gather to Talk Things Over*

FRANCIS R. BELLAMY was a traveling book salesman when he suddenly decided to write books instead of selling other people's books. So he turned out "The Balance," which made a stir.

The Brooklyn *Eagle* said of it: "The young man who can write like this should have a dozen more good novels in him." Boston *Transcript:* "If his first novel is any index to those to come, he is an author who bids fair to make his mark in American fiction." The *Dial:* "A first novel is not always a good test of an author's powers, but such a novel as 'The Balance' holds a promise and arouses a great expectation."

THE promise is fulfilled in "A Flash of Gold," Mr. Bellamy's second novel, which EVERYBODY'S will begin publishing serially in June. It is more than an intensely human story; it contains a great lesson. When we asked Mr. Bellamy to say something about himself, he wrote:

"Who's Who" proclaims me a farmer, a book salesman and author of "The Balance." *Harper's Magazine* proclaims me an editor and special correspondent, by which I suppose they refer to my Washington editorship of the *Red Cross Magazine*, my time in France and Germany in 1918, and my managing editorship in New York. But still some details have been overlooked. I have been a printers' devil, a farm-hand, a farmer, a milkman, a book salesman, a hat salesman, a theatrical producer—a very poor and bad one!—a golfer (what Harry Leon Wilson calls a "sub-golfer") an author, an editor, and now a contributor to EVERYBODY'S. Throughout it all I've always stuck only to two things: writing and golf. Because they both look easy, and aren't. I belong to the Williams Club, indicating my college.

I've always been an incipient playwright, and once got a comic opera (tabloid) called "The Princess of Asia" on the boards. Broadway has never had anything to do with me since. At present I live in Holliston, Mass. I guess that's all—except that I'm engaged now in writing a third book which will outshine both the others. Do I hear some one say, "That won't be hard?" No. I hear no one. No; not off here. It's very pleasant in Holliston.

EVERYBODY'S has introduced many new authors, but seldom if ever has it had the chance to present two in one issue, as it does in this number. They are Harry Esty Dounce, author of "Trapped," and Basil Dickey, author of "The Bad News."

Mr. Dounce was graduated from Hamilton College in 1910, began newspaper work the same year. He is thirty-two, and the father of one "future superman." In college he was advised to go in for law. Didn't, because advised to. Being, as he says, interested in mongrel dogs, he therefore deprecates birth-control. His ultimate ambition is to be able to volley consistently when running in on service and to smash well from deep court. He confesses to strong distaste for office conferences, for requesting a man's reaction when you want his opinion, and for inspirational writers.

MR. DICKEY also comes from a Western college, where he says he contributed "much bad verse and some short stories to the college papers."

I began writing for the movies early, when folks were so surprised to see the pictures move they didn't care how bad the stories were—a condition that still exists in less degree. Once I collaborated with a sociologist in a propaganda picture for prison reform, and in gathering material I became acquainted with so-called crooks both in and out of prison. I found them much like other folks—that is, I was unable to discover the much discussed "criminal type." There seems to be as many varieties of crooks as of the rest of us who profess to be honest. A few have a queer streak of chivalry and daring that frequently brings about their downfall. The original of Eddie Parsons, a character in "The Bad News," is now doing his first and only

The man on the left is Charles Divine, whose story, "The Snake-charmer of Kairwan," appears in the June issue. He is seated in front of a Kairwan café, in far-away Tunis, conversing with a native policeman.

"bit" because he stopped to pick up a child he had knocked down in making his getaway.

READERS continue to write about the change of EVERYBODY'S to an all-fiction magazine. Most approve; some ask why, but one, a Western minister, has found the reason for himself.

> The management [he says] must have had a brainstorm or engaged a congenital idiot for editor, a near kin to the animal that spoke to the prophet Balaam.

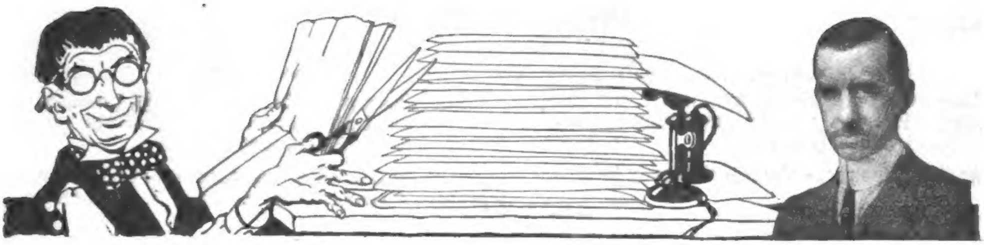
The one thing clear to us was that the word "ass" instead of "animal" was what the good man would have written had his typewriter not been too polite. So we were curious to know what went on between Balaam and the ass and we consulted the Good Book. We were rejoiced to find that the ass, at least, wasn't near-sighted; he saw the Angel of the Lord before Balaam, and saved Balaam's life. Then we took heart and began to hope that maybe, if we watched our step, we might be the hero and the parson the villain of the following story, which Irvin Cobb tells.

> In Paducah there was a husky negro named "Bull" Shackelford who ruled the black belt by a combination of brawn and intimidation. One day there got off a boat a little yellow darky, a stranger, who had some reputation as a prize-fighter. Into a saloon he went and ordered refreshment. As he was pulling off a bill from an enormous roll to pay for it, Bull Shackelford laid a heavy hand on his shoulder.
>
> "Say, you little nigger," he bellowed; "you've got too much dough to take care of. You just pass over that roll and I'll give you back what you orter have. Dat's de way I takes care of de niggers round here."
>
> The little darky did not raise his eyes, but he did raise his hand, and he flicked off Bull's hand very much as he would have swept off a fly.
>
> Bull squared off and glowered.
>
> "Do you know who I is?" he demanded. "I'se the bully of this town. When I gives orders, everybody obeys."
>
> Almost without moving his position, the little darky let go an uppercut and Bull went down. When he recovered consciousness, he looked at the little fellow long and hard. Finally he said,
>
> "Dar's just one thing I want to know and dat's all, Mister Man: Who is you, anyway?"
>
> Very solemnly the little darky replied,
>
> "I'se de pusson you thought you was when you come in dat door."

There is more about why the size and contents of the magazine were changed on the title-page of this issue.

SEWELL HAGGARD.

On the right is George F. Worts, author of "Soup and Fish," to appear in June. His companion is Herb Roth, the newspaper caricaturist. These two recently returned from a trip to China and India, which was a series of very lively experiences.



# Prose *and* Worse, *by* Gridley Adams

### DO YOU BELIEVE IN SIGNS?

In Middletown, Conn.: "*H. Press, Tailor.*"

New Carlisle, O.: "*Doom Brothers, Undertakers.*"

Waynesfield, O.: "*Beer & Beer operate a creamery.*" (Send up a sample; make it several.)

Windsor, Conn.: "*Hotel Brusie.*"

Hartford, Conn.: "*Mr. Quick runs a laundry.*" (And it took me a week to get mine.)

Over a store in Greenwich Village, New York: "*A. Temptation.*"

Union Hill, N. J.: "*Rank, Printer.*"

Adv. in University, Va.: "*Graves is the place for monuments.*" (R. M )

On Y. M. C. A., Twenty-third St., New York: "*Social Problems of the Homeless at 8 P. M. in the parlor.*"

*(Denison, Ia., Review)*

Henry Lass, who has been helping at the Salor furniture store since the first of the year, ha signed his work and is now busying himself ar his home. He was helping Mr. Schnoor mer an accommodation and not because he partic cared to work.

**So few are really crazy about it.**

---

*(Quincy Herald)*

For Rent—In Townsend apartments, a large, newly finished and furnished room, with widows on four sides.

**Well, have you anything else that's vacant?**

---

*(Birmingham Age-Herald)*

Wanted—Delivery-boy to ride bicycle that knows the town. (C. C.)

**Would you take a chance on *that* wheel?**

---

*(Chicago Tribune)*

Dear Miss Blake: Is it correct to walk on the outside of a lady?

**Yes; but be careful not to step on her face.**

---

Will Hays' home town, Sullivan, Ind., isn't far from Reelsville.

**And so it just had to be.**

Silk socks, 49c. 2,000 pairs purchased for this sale. You never saw such values. They won't last long. (C. C.)

**There's candor for you!**

---

*(Philadelphia Ledger)*

Second-story front room; semiprivate bath; electric light.

**Again I repeat: I choose the faucet end of the tub.**

---

*(Adv. in Savannah News)*

Wanted by a widower a respectable woman to nurse a little girl at least thirty-five years old. (G. J. O.)

**Good-night, nurse!**

---

*(Zanesville, Ohio, Dispatch)*

Black and White Ladies' Cotton Lisle Hose; worth 25c. A gigantic Special, 9c. (M. A. P.)

**Try Chicago market for that size.**

*Copyright, 1922, by Gridley Adams.*

*(Adv. in Newport, N. H., Argus)*

Assorted lot of ladies' of numbers we are discontinuing. Practically all sizes represented. Mostly blacks and values up to $1.00. (C. D. M.)

**At that price there shouldn't be any bachelors.**

---

*(Newport, R. I., News)*

WANTED—Maid for general housework in family of two adults. Must know how to coo. No laundry. (MRS. P. H. T.)

**"My w.'s gone to the country! Hurrah! Hurrah!"**

---

*(Beloit, Wis., News)*

Thirty or forty good young laying hens wanted. Must be reasonable.

**About crossing the road, for examp.**

---

*(Elko, Nev., Independent)*

ATTENTION SCANDALMONGERS!

TO SOME OF THE PEOPLE OF PINE VALLEY AND PALISADE, NEVADA:

The ones making remarks about me and telling that I have, or will, break my husband, R. F. Raine, please stop it. If any one has a better right to spend anyth has had ill

---

*(From Glossop's "Strangers' Guide to Chicago," 1881)*

Some of the papers are making a good deal of fun of Chicago because it lays claim to being a summer resort, and at the same time having three murders a day. Well, we do not see what a few murders have to do with Chicago as a summer resort. Certainly that city is as cool as any city in the land. It is right on the bank of Lake Michigan, where breezes blow constantly. It has as fine a drive as any in the country, where Southern or Eastern people can enjoy themselves without danger of being murdered. Chicago, with all its rough element, is as safe a city to live in as there is in America, and no person who desires to pass a pleasant summer or a happy winter need go beyond Chicago because occasionally some roughs in a bad locality get to shooting each other. The respectable part of the town is highly respectable. The murders are nearly all committed in low places where summer visitors would never be obliged to go, and the murders usually rid the city of two hard characters, the murdered rough being buried and the murderer caught and locked up.

*(From Chicago Daily News, 1921)*

MEN—Experienced on ladies' pocketbooks and hand-bags; steady work.

**Boy, get me a Florida time-table.**

*(New York Times)*

They have put Milo D. Campbell, president of the National Milk Producers' Federation, on the Committee on Ponds and Streams.

**I know the feller what advertised for a man to drive a milk-wagon who was "a good mixer."**

---

*(From "The Dust Flower" in Good Housekeeping)*

In the lower hall she resisted the impulse to slip into the library and kiss the place where she had kissed his feet on the memorable morning when her hand had been on his brow. (D. L. T.)

**Boy, bring me the anatomical charts, quick!**

---

*(Everybody's for October. Yes; honest!)*

He sat with his head pressed between his shoulder-blades. (E. J.)

**Say, boy, Barnum wants you.**

---

*(Cincinnati Times-Star)*

REED—To Mr. and Mrs. Charles Reed, a baby daughter, Edith Marion, December 16, three weeks after the death of her Uncle Frank. Thanks to nurse, E. M. Powell, and Dr. Price. (M. K. R. and C. A. M.)

**Everybody works but father.**

---

*(Chanute, Kan., Tribune)*

Miss Esther Smith, of this city and J. Clayton ith, of Huntington, Ind., were united in marriage esterday at high noon at the home of the bride's parents, Rev. and Mrs. H. E. Smith, 1105 S. Central Avenue. The ceremony being performed by the bride's father, Rev. Mr. Smith. The wedding-march was played by Mrs. C. R. Smith and Mr. and Mrs. A. D. Smith acted as best man and bridesmaid. Following congratulations a three-course dinner was served by Mrs. H. E. Smith. (A. F. V.)

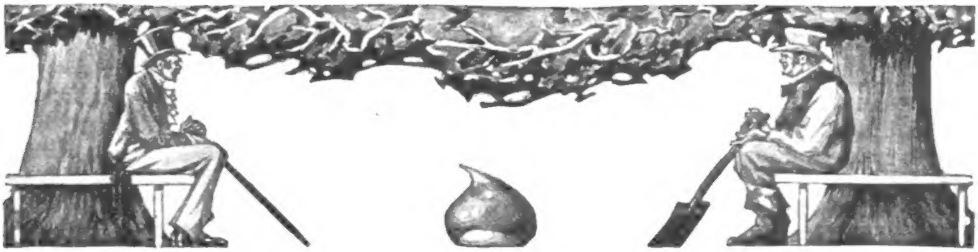
**Too bad their uncles, the Cough Bros. from Po'keepsie, couldn't have dropped in.**

---

*(Williston, N. D., Farmers' Press)*

Miss Josie Knudsvig and Mr. Oleander Knudsvig were married at Williston last Thursday. The bride is the daughter of John Knudsvig, implement dealer and manager of the Winter Truesdale Ames Elevator Company, who is a good grain buyer and will undoubtedly buy again next year. The groom is a highly esteemed young man and worked on his brother's threshing rig last fall and did more work than any other man. The happy couple left Williston on the morning train for Appam, to visit with the bride's parents, who are reported to have lots of money. Oleander certainly has an eye for business.

**Earning his living by the sweat of his *Frau*.**



# Everybody's Chestnut Tree

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for available ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped addressed envelope.*

**A** SAN FRANCISCO lady was training a new and inexperienced Chinese house-boy, and among other things found it necessary to teach him how to receive a caller.

"Now, Wing," she said, "when I come home this afternoon I shall ring the bell, and you must pay attention to what I tell you to do when you open the door."

When the boy did this on her return, she handed him her visiting-card and had him show her into the drawing-room. Before long a caller appeared. Wing took the proffered bit of pasteboard and gravely compared it with his mistress's card, which he produced from his sleeve. At the end of his scrutiny he remarked,

"Tickee no same; no can come in."

**HE** HAD been a newspaper reporter long enough to consider himself well past the "cub" stage.

It was two A.M., barely an hour before press-time, when the 'phone-bell rang. Replacing the receiver after a few excited "Whats?" and "Whens?" he grabbed his rain-coat and, telling the city editor there was a big train wreck on the W. & N., rushed out.

Breathless, he gasped at the bridge watchman ten minutes later:

"Where's eighty-five? Did she sink?"

"Where's *what?* Yuh *crazy?*" asked the watchman.

"I'm from the *Clarion;* we got a report train eighty-five just ran off the bridge."

"It did. It does every morning about this time. Whaddaya think—this bridge goes everywhere with the train?"

**A** LADY from a Southern city, visiting New York, was asked by a friend if she would help her look after a party of children from the tenement districts she was taking on a day's outing, and agreed to do so.

The trip was to Bronx Park and included the zoo. The day proved a wearisome one for the Southern visitor, who was not young, and by the time they were all homeward bound on the subway train, she was pretty well exhausted. But she felt compensated for her efforts when she reflected how she had been able to help give these poor shut-in children a glimpse of clear sky and green fields, let them fill their lungs with pure, fresh air and romp somewhere else than on fire-escapes and trolley tracks. With this agreeable thought she turned to a little girl sitting beside her and asked if she had ever been to Bronx Park before.

"Oh, yes!" the child answered. "I've been there lots of times. In a automobile. My brother's a chauffeur. And next Sunday I'm going to Coney Island."

The tired lady decided she would do some investigating the next time she was asked to assist in any of New York's philanthropic projects.

**A** MAN in a high state of intoxication was shouting most vigorously at a lamp-post and finally became an object of concern to a policeman.

"What's the matter?" asked the representative of Law and Order.

"Oh, never mind, mishter," was the reply. "Thash all right. I know she'sh home, all right—I shee a light up-shtairs."

A COLORED minister met one of his flock in the street, a man who had just been married. Rastus was muttering to himself and appeared to be laboring under considerable excitement. So the minister halted him and asked what was the matter.

"Lord!" said Rastus. "It's Mandy. Dat 'oman doan' do nothin' but want money. Yassuh; dat's what it is—money, money, money all de time. In de mohnin', fust t'ing, she ask for money. When I comes home to dinner, she doan' talk nothin' but money, money, money. In the ebenin' it's de same t'ing—wantin' money. Money, money, money—yassuh; nothin' but money."

The minister was sympathetic.

"Well, dat's too bad," he said. "It sho is a cross to have a 'strav'gant wife. What she do wid all dat money?"

"Do? I doan' know what she do wid it. I ain't give her none yet."

"WHEN I was in London just after the armistice," said Richard Connell, who went across with a New York regiment, "I saw three of General O'Ryan's soldiers march up to a policeman. 'Say, officer,' said one of them; 'tell us how to get to the swellest hash-house in this burg.' The 'bobby' thought it over for a moment. Then he said, 'If I taikes yer meanin' right, I think as 'ow you'd better taike a taxi to the Clerridge.'

"The Claridge is a fashionable hotel and restaurant. The three got into a taxi at once. I got into another and followed. The restaurant was crowded when the three entered. In a loud voice one of them waved an arm at the head waiter.

" 'Hi, *gassong! Toot sweet!*'

"The waiter came.

" 'Yes, sir?'

" 'We want the swellest feed in this joint,' said another, 'also *toot sweet!*'

" 'Yes. sir,' said the waiter. He bowed and showed them to a table. People were looking round everywhere.

" 'And say, *gassong,*' said the third, 'bring a couple of quarts of champagne with the eats—see?—and the tooter the sweeter! We're American, we are!'

The waiter, rubbing his hands politely together, bowed again.

" 'Yes sir,' he said; 'I'll warn the other guests.' "

AN IRISHMAN, having obtained a pint of whisky with great difficulty and at considerable expense, started home with his treasure concealed in a hip-pocket. On the way he was grazed by a speeding automobile and knocked down. Picking himself up, he was congratulating himself on escaping from injury when he felt something trickling down his leg.

"Merciful powers!" he exclaimed. "I hope it's blood."

THE late Archbishop Ireland of St. Paul, Minnesota, in the course of a round of the rural parishes, found it necessary at one place to ride with a country drayman, a son of the Old Sod, in order to reach his destination.

It was a trip of about eight miles and the prelate sat beside the driver. As they were passing through a small village, the archbishop pointed to a tiny frame Catholic church and said to his companion,

"I was the pastor of that church thirty-two years ago."

The drayman had no idea of the identity of his distinguished guest, for it was a raw day and the archbishop had his top-coat buttoned high, concealing the purple of his rank; but, following the prelate's remark, the driver turned and gazed at him curiously. Then he asked sympathetically:

"And what caused your downfall, Father? Was it drink?"

The archbishop used to tell this story on himself, and with no little glee.

PROFESSIONAL speakers occasionally find themselves in amusing as well as embarrassing situations. A successful Chautauqua lecturer, a prominent attorney in his own city, has for years entertained large audiences with his lecture, "The Trial of Jesus from a Lawyer's Standpoint." Recently he listened to the following diverting introduction from the lips of a platform manager:

"I am very glad to introduce to yo ladies and gentlemen, Mr. B——, who w now entertain us with his celebrated lectu 'The Trial of Jesus from a Lawyer's Star point.' I can only imagine one lect which might prove more interesting to t audience than the one announced. Th would be 'The Trial of a Lawyer from Jesus's Standpoint.' "